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Glitter and Life: An interview with Emily Saliers of Indigo Girls

By Gregg Shapiro

The Indigo Girls – Emily Saliers and Amy Ray – are having a moment. Since the release of Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" movie in the summer of 2023, in which the queer duo's "Closer To Fine" was heard repeatedly, to today, when they are prominently featured in Tom Gustafson's "Glitter & Doom" and Alexandria Bombach's doc "Indigo Girls: It's Only Life After All," Indigo Girls are hotter than ever. That's just the half of it! In addition to a well-received performance on the "Today" show, Indigo Girls are embarking on a multi-city concert tour, including several dates with Melissa Etheridge. In the midst of their super busy schedule, Emily was generous enough to make time for an interview. [**Indigo Girls perform on August 11 in Highland Park at Ravinia.]**

Gregg Shapiro: In the introduction to my favorable review of Alexandria Bombach's documentary "Indigo Girls: It's Only Life After All," I talk about how since the summer of 2023, when "Closer To Fine" was featured prominently in Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" to today when we are speaking, Indigo Girls are having an amazing year. So, I'd like to begin by asking you to say what it meant to you to have "Closer To Fine" heard in "Barbie."

Emily Saliers: First of all, it was a huge surprise to be asked. And it was an honor because both Amy and I adore Greta Gerwig's work. It just kind of fell out of the sky, this massive gift. We knew it was going to be in the trailer, but we didn't know it was gonna be in the film. We certainly didn't know that was going to be featured in its own way in terms of its content in the movie. It was so exciting and so gratifying because we love Greta's work. I loved the movie, too. I thought it was amazing on so many levels. The issues it delved into, the way it looked, how stylized it was, how funny it was, how clever, and the dancing. The whole thing was like this big experience. So, to have "Closer To Fine" included in something that I really loved so much as a piece of art was fantastic. Then, of course, there was a spike in interest, I think, in the Indigo Girls' music. What a gift that was to come out of nowhere and take hold. I think we're still feeling the repercussions of that in a positive way.

GS: As I mentioned, I enjoyed the doc "It's Only Life After All." How did it feel to be the subject of a documentary and have your life and career highlighted that way?

ES: We met Alexandria, the director, through Kathlyn Horan who was one of the producers on the documentary. We had lunch together and she said, "I'd like to make a documentary about y'all. I can see that that's never been done before." In our conversations, we were clear with Alexandria that we wanted it to

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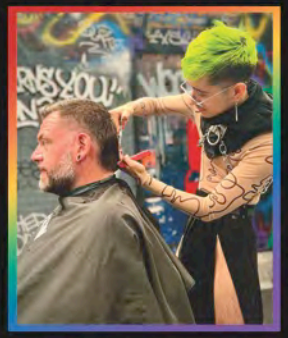

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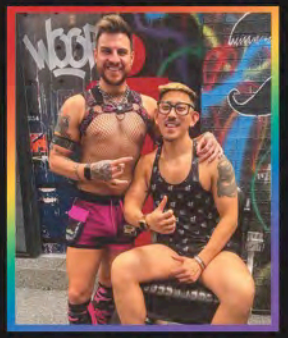

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be not so much just about us, but about our community. About a community that has gone through these things together. I think she handled that very deftly and respectfully. Instead of feeling like, "Here's a movie about y'all," it feels more like here's a movie about the power of music and community. Especially for queer folks or people who don't fit inside a box, for them to have an openness and expression. And for us to go through our hard times in life together. The fact that it landed within the scope of the time of "Barbie" and "Glitter & Doom," was just kind of like, "Wow! What is happening?" This is like the giving season for the Indigo Girls.

GS: I'm glad you mentioned "Glitter & Doom." When I interviewed Amy in 2023 about her solo album ("If It All Goes South"), I asked her about the possibility of a stage musical consisting of Indigo Girls songs, and that's when I learned about "Glitter & Doom." The movie not only incorporates many Indigo Girls songs, but you also appear in the movie as the character of The Dream. What was that experience like for you?
ES: We read the script – we get script submissions sometimes – but this one really stood out. We loved the story. Then we heard the music, Michelle Chamuel's arrangements and production, and how our music was arranged, produced, and performed in a way that we'd never heard before. That was really exciting for us and we loved it. We love Tom (Gustafson) and Cory (Krueckeberg) who co-directed the film (written by Krueckeberg). To be a cameo – Amy, I think, was terrified. Amy will tell you she does not like to act. I think she did an amazing job. For me, it was exciting. I was in high school theater, and I don't mind that. We had a different experience of actually being in the film. We both love the movie and it just premiered in a theater in New York. It's so well done. It's a colorful and well-directed film with the songs. The actors are captivating. I love the story. Again, it was this wonderful piece of art that someone was creating that they invited us to be part of with our music. That feels good. Also, the other thing Gregg, that's important to me and Amy, is that when we were coming up, I remember this growing up as a young queer in Atlanta; there was a divide between the gay male world and the lesbian world. There was the complexity of the horror of the AIDS crisis, but beyond that, there was a separation, sort of never the twain shall meet. I feel like this experience with Tom and Cory and the gay male presence, the queer presence in the film, and then bringing in the lesbian artists to contribute was such a great energy and a great confluence of things that historically has not always happened. It's sort of like bringing all the queers together. That was profoundly moving to me and Amy, as well. I think it was important. I don't know if you remember that divide.

GS: I do! We're close in age, and I remember that divide within the community. When I would tell people about "Glitter & Doom," about how it features the Indigo Girls' music, they would ask if it was a movie about a lesbian couple. I'd tell them, no, it's about a male couple and they'd say, "Wow! Indigo Girls songs in a movie about a gay male couple!" So, yes, you're right. "Glitter & Doom" attempts to bridge that gap.
ES: It does. I knew it, intellectually, but sitting in the theater and experiencing it was a whole other thing. It brought to life the way that queer people come together and the power of that, artistically, politically, socially, in every realm. Amy was sitting there in the theater experiencing the same thing and we didn't realize it until we started answering questions during the Q&A after the film was shown.

GS: "Glitter & Doom" also includes a song from your 2017 solo album "Murmuration Nation." What does that inclusion mean to you?
ES: When I heard the way it's treated in the movie, it was so thrilling. I wrote that song, "Match," with Kristen Hall, one of the original members of Sugarland. It takes a seed of a song that was written so long ago for fun with a friend, and it makes it become this whole world of its own in the context of the movie. I love the way it was treated musically. In a way, it's like sitting outside of something and hearing something beautiful, but then it's connected to you because you created it. It's hard to articulate, but I thought it was really cool that they included a solo song from each of us in the whole body of work for the movie. For me, sitting there as an audience member, I was like, "Oh, who wrote this song? It's pretty. This is really working [laughs]." It was the experience of being outside and inside at the same time and I don't get to experience that a lot. It was really cool.

GS: We're speaking on March 28, and later today Indigo Girls perform at David Geffen Hall in New York, and the concert includes a conversation with the brilliant music journalist Ann Powers. What are you most looking forward to about that?
ES: Amy and I have the utmost respect for Ann Powers. When we first met her, we were so intimidated, I don't think we could barely speak [laughs]. Now, our paths have crossed through the years. To sit in an intimate gathering and talk with Ann, it's always an honor to have anything mediated by Ann. She's such a stellar journalist, a journalist of incredible pedigree. It's going to be intimate because Amy and I won't be standing up at our mic stands and doing a whole show. We're seated and we're playing songs and Ann is asking questions about the process. It's going to be a much more intimate experience. Of course, to be in New York, it's one of my very favorite places to play. We're looking forward to it. Lincoln Center is beautiful. It's sold out. They're going to be showing it on big screens outside the theatre, and that will be cool, too. I'm looking forward to the whole experience of it.
GS: Speaking of concerts, Indigo Girls are touring with Melissa Etheridge. How did this amazing combination come to be?
ES: It is so cool! We've never done anything like this with Melissa. Of course, we have such respect for her career and her music. She was doing one of those rock cruises and we got invited to be on that, and we couldn't do it. But the speed was planted. After all these years, there was interest from both parties to play some shows together. Then it turned out to be playing summer sheds together. She'll have her thing

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Photo By Jeremy Cowart

and we'll have our band, and we'll do some stuff together. Then it turned into this run of shows. When we first announced to a crowd that we were doing shows with Melissa Etheridge, it was in the Northeast somewhere, people screamed [laughs]! It was like, "Okay, this is a good decision." We've been in touch with each other about doing a song together or whatever the case may be. It's the first time we've done something like this with a storied artist like Melissa and we're both so excited.

GS: Additionally, on Sept. 1 Indigo Girls are playing Town Hall in Provincetown.
ES: Woo-hoo!

GS: This made me wonder if Lea DeLaria, who not only appears in "Glitter & Doom," but is also a presence in PTOWN might be joining the Indigo Girls for a number.
ES: We haven't heard from Lea, but we would always welcome Lea with open arms, of course. We love Lea, and if Lea is there, of course we'll do something together. But we haven't gone through official lines. Maybe you're putting the bug in Lea's ear right now.

GS: I'm sure you don't need to be reminded, but it's been four years since the release of the Indigo Girls' "Look Long" album. Is there a new Indigo Girls album in the works?
ES: It's kind of floating in the ether. Everything is meeting at this juncture where we have the documentary and "Glitter & Doom," and then "Barbie" happened, and we're doing a lot of symphony shows and touring. At the same time, Amy has a 10-year-old-daughter and I have an 11-year-old-daughter. We're feeling the pain of missing life. So, we're trying to orchestrate how to keep our lives in balance with home life and touring. Then Amy had a super long tour with her solo band. And I'm writing for musical theater. To answer your question, as we're getting older, we just seem to be getting busier [laughs] with these projects that are all wonderful. We have talked about the next album, and we started tossing around ideas, but we're going to take a little bit of a mental break this summer and spend time with our family. Then I'm sure we'll be refreshed after that and from the tour with Melissa and Amos Lee and start to really focus in on when we can do the next album. There will be a next album, it's just been such a busy time.

GS: Finally, because Indigo Girls are renowned for their activism, do you have any words of wisdom regarding the upcoming 2024 election?
ES: [Long pause] I'm just going to come out and say I'm voting for Biden. I'm going to say that it is absolutely critical that if you're of voting age and ability, you have to vote. You cannot be distracted by the media that may pull you one way or another. I encourage you not to be distracted by a feeling of, "Well, my vote doesn't count," because this election is as critical as any election has ever been. We're seeing a shift after Roe V. Wade was overturned in local and state politics. The onslaught of legislation against queer people, particularly trans people; conservatives are coming for all our rights, all of them, I would say, please vote, vote progressive. Don't be distracted by anything, even if you feel you have to vote for the lesser of two evils in your mind, vote for the lesser of two evils. This is an absolutely critical juncture for obvious reasons. I truly believe that the fabric of democracy is coming apart in this country, but we have to protect our queer family. We are

under attack, and you have to vote for the candidate who supports us. That candidate is obviously Biden. It's extremely important to vote in your local elections because conservatives who are anti-queer are taking over school boards. You know what they're doing; banning books. Gregg, I could spend the next 20 minutes imploring anybody who's reading this to vote through a progressive lens. They're coming after us and we need to stand up for equal rights and for the future of democracy in this country.

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Best Bette: An interview with "On Bette Midler" author Kevin Winkler

By Gregg Shapiro

In her own distinctive way, the divine Bette Midler has been telling her own story throughout her career. Via her music, her stage shows, her movies, her countless TV appearances, on the page, and through her activism, Midler has kept us abreast (sorry, I couldn't resist) of who she is. With his new book "On Bette Midler: An Opinionated Guide" (Oxford University Press, 2024), gay writer Kevin Winkler has taken on the task of not only tracing Midler's personal chronology, but also taking an in-depth look into her performing life; warts and all. Winkler succeeds in being both entertaining (he doesn't hold back in his running commentary) and informative (if you didn't know about the early 1970s video of Midler performing Joni Mitchell's "For Free" at the Continental Baths, available on YouTube, you do now). Kevin was gracious enough to answer a few questions before the book hit shelves in May 2024.

Gregg Shapiro: Kevin, both of your previous books "Big Deal: Bob Fosse and Dance in the American Musical" and "Everything is Choreography: The Musical Theater of Tommy Tune," deal with choreographers and choreography. Would you say that dance is where your primary interest lies?
Kevin Winkler: Generally, yes. I was a professional dancer in New York City for several years, and I'm particularly interested in the development of dance in musical theater. Hence, the subjects of my first two books.

GS: Was your new book, "On Bette Midler: An Opinionated Guide," written specifically for Oxford's "On" series or was it written and then accepted for the series?
KW: Oxford's "On" series has been, I believe, rather loosely defined. There have been previous books in the series on figures as diverse as Stephen Sondheim, Barbra Streisand, and Marilyn Monroe. Each is a deep dive into the creative life of its subject. I had been thinking for some time that Bette Midler's influence as an artist and as a major conduit of gay sensibilities to a broader audience had been somewhat forgotten. After reading a couple of the "On" series, I decided that someone should write a similar book on Midler. It took me about 10 seconds to decide I was the one to do it [laughs]! After submitting a formal proposal to Oxford, I was given a contract to write the book.

GS: The new book is divided into four sections: "Bette Midler's Theater," "Bette Midler's Recordings," "Bette Midler's Television," and "Bette Midler's Movies." Why did you choose to arrange it in this way?
KW: I wanted to explore Midler's development as a multi-platform artist, one who has excelled in a variety of media. Concentrating on her work separately in each area allowed me to dig deeper and more inquisitively. I tried arranging the book chronologically, but it felt muddled. This arrangement gives the book a sense of clarity. At least I think it does.

GS: I think so, as well. In terms of the book being "an opinionated guide," you appear to have reserved your most rigorous criticism for Bette's recordings.
KW: I adore Midler as a recording artist and can think of a half dozen of her albums I would take with me to a desert island. But not all of her recordings are the equal of her best work. My opinion is that her least successful recordings are ones where she sands off the rough edges of her voice and personality – the very qualities that make her so unique – and tries for a more generic "pop" sound. She ends up sounding rather ordinary and not like the

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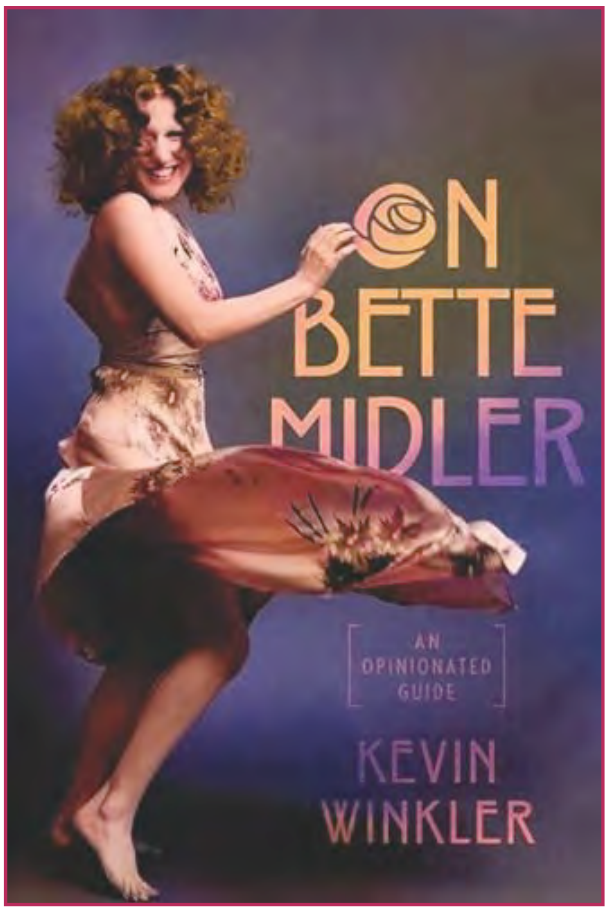
devastating singing actress she is.

GS: In the "Birth of the Divine" introduction to the book, there is a compare-and-contrast section titled "The Streisand Thing." This made me think about how "On Bette Midler" is coming out a few months after Barbra Streisand's memoir, which in turn was released more than 20 years after Midler's 1980 semi-memoir "A View From a Broad." What do you think it says about her that she chose to write about at that still relatively early stage in her career?
KW: "A View From a Broad" is a delightful travelogue in words and photographs loosely documenting her first world tour, along with side excursions to moments from her earlier life and career. It wasn't meant as a strict autobiography, but as a funny, Auntie Mame-ish snapshot of a particular, highly-charged period in her career. It arrived just as she was tearing up movie screens in "The Rose" and barnstorming the U.S. with her stage show. So far, Midler hasn't written her memoirs, but who knows? Maybe she will get around to it – though I hope not to the extended length of Streisand's tome [laughs]!

GS: Bette's connection to the queer community is a central component of her professional and personal life. As a teenager, I was fortunate to attend two of her 1977 concerts in Chicago. The first was in April at the Opera House and the second was in December at the more intimate music venue Park West. I wasn't out yet, but I knew that she was speaking to me through her music which I had been listening to for a few years. Would you say that, as a gay man, you felt drawn to her in a similar way?
KW: Oh, absolutely! As I say in the book, she took the boys from the Continental Baths with her as she moved into the mainstream, and acclimated straight audiences to our sensibilities. She was every mouthy girl who ever stood up for her gay friends. I responded to her emotional transparency, her humor which clearly acknowledged the gay men in her audience, and her fearlessness. As someone who felt different and fearful of not being accepted, she made me think that if she was that fearless, maybe I could be, too.

GS: In the book, you make repeated mentions of Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro. Regarding Laura, you wrote about Bette inducting her into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2012. Now that Cher, who also has a history with Bette, is being inducted, would you agree that it's Bette's time? And what do you think her chances are of being an inductee?
KW: Midler is definitely worthy of induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame! But I have a feeling it won't happen. Despite the rock bona fides of her earlier days, when she sang songs by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, and kicked ass as the hard-rocking Rose, today Midler is most associated with what she calls her "inspirational ballads," like "Wind Beneath My Wings" and "From a Distance." The people who make the decisions about who gets inducted sometimes have short memories, so I suspect this is one honor she won't receive, regrettably. By the way, go to YouTube and check out Midler's heartfelt induction of Nyro into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame from 2012. She truly "gets" Nyro and eloquently honors her.



GS: Vito Russo's 1971 video recording of Bette performing Joni's song "For Free" at the Continental Bath is simply breathtaking, and I'm grateful that you mentioned the way she transformed the song into a waltz. Do you think Bette would ever do a Joni Mitchell songbook album the way she did ones for Rosemary Clooney and Peggy Lee?
KW: Speaking of Joni and Laura, I was hoping that one of them might be the subject of Bette's third songbook tribute album after Rosemary Clooney and Peggy Lee. The Clooney album was a hit and was nominated for a Grammy. But the Lee set did poorly (and was not a good fit for Midler, in my honest opinion), so it put the kibosh on any more songbook albums. But Midler has an affinity for both Joni and Laura, and I would love to hear her interpret songs from their catalogs. Midler recorded "For Free" for her first album, but it was not included and has never been issued. Time to open up those vaults!
GS: Do you think that either or both Joni or Laura could be the subject of another "On" book by you?
KW: If someone writes an "On" book about either of those two artists, I will be first in line to buy it. But as much as I admire their creative output, I've never been as passionate about them as I am about Midler. So, I don't feel capable

of writing the kind of book their careers deserve.

GS: As you mention in the book, Bette is "just an Oscar short" of being an EGOT. Do you think that there might be a movie role out there for her that will someday earn her an Oscar?
KW: Sure. Hope springs eternal [laughs]! Midler is still going strong in movies and has a new film coming out this summer. A choice supporting role would be the perfect vehicle for her to ride all the way to an Oscar. As I mention in the book, one of her most finely-judged performances was in a little-seen film called "Then She Found Me" from 2007. Midler played a New York talk show host, sort of like Oprah Winfrey, who reconnects with the daughter she gave up for adoption decades earlier. The film starred and was directed by Helen Hunt, and her scenes with Midler are a highlight of the film. Midler plays a self-centered celebrity who slowly reveals shades of vulnerability and regret to this new daughter, and she's very moving. If the film had been more widely seen, I think Midler might have gotten some Oscar love.

GS: I loved Bette in "Then She Found Me." I don't usually say this about bibliographies, but the non-traditional "selected bibliography" you wrote is very amusing. Why did you write it in that way?
KW: I've read every book that's been written about Midler over the years; about a half dozen. Some I've liked, some I haven't. Since the operative word in my book's title is "opinionated," I decided to offer my opinions on each of them. I hope I wasn't mean. And since Midler is herself a woman of letters, I also included her books among those I discuss.

GS: How do you think Bette would feel about your book?
KW: Oxford has sent her a copy of the book, and I don't know if she'll even read it. But if she does, I hope she recognizes that it's the work of someone who greatly admires her as an artist. I revere her work and wanted to discuss it at length – to pick it apart and examine it in all its complexity and all its joy.

GS: Have you started thinking about or working on your next book project?
KW: Yes, I'm at the very beginning of working on a new project. I'm superstitious about discussing projects too early, but it's a move back to the world of Broadway dance.

GRAB MATT

Photo by Ashley Purnell

Rainbow Connection

Matt Cullen's Our Queer Life Series Unites the LGBTQ+ Community

By Josh Beisler

Matt Cullen has made it his mission to help destigmatize topics like gay sex work and amplify important issues such as the misrepresentation of trans men and women. On his popular YouTube show, Our Queer Life, he shines the spotlight on those in the community who have lived in the shadows for too long: ballroom queens, gay Orthodox Jews, gay cowboys in rodeo, adult film stars, and trans women who are addicted to illegal plastic surgery.

Matt's belief is that viewers who identify with the people he spotlights in Our Queer Life may get a better understanding of them and perhaps, feel a bit of empathy for their plights. "In these divided times, it is more important than ever before that the LGBTQ+ community and its allies make an effort to find common ground with one another. We're stronger together, so let us stand united."

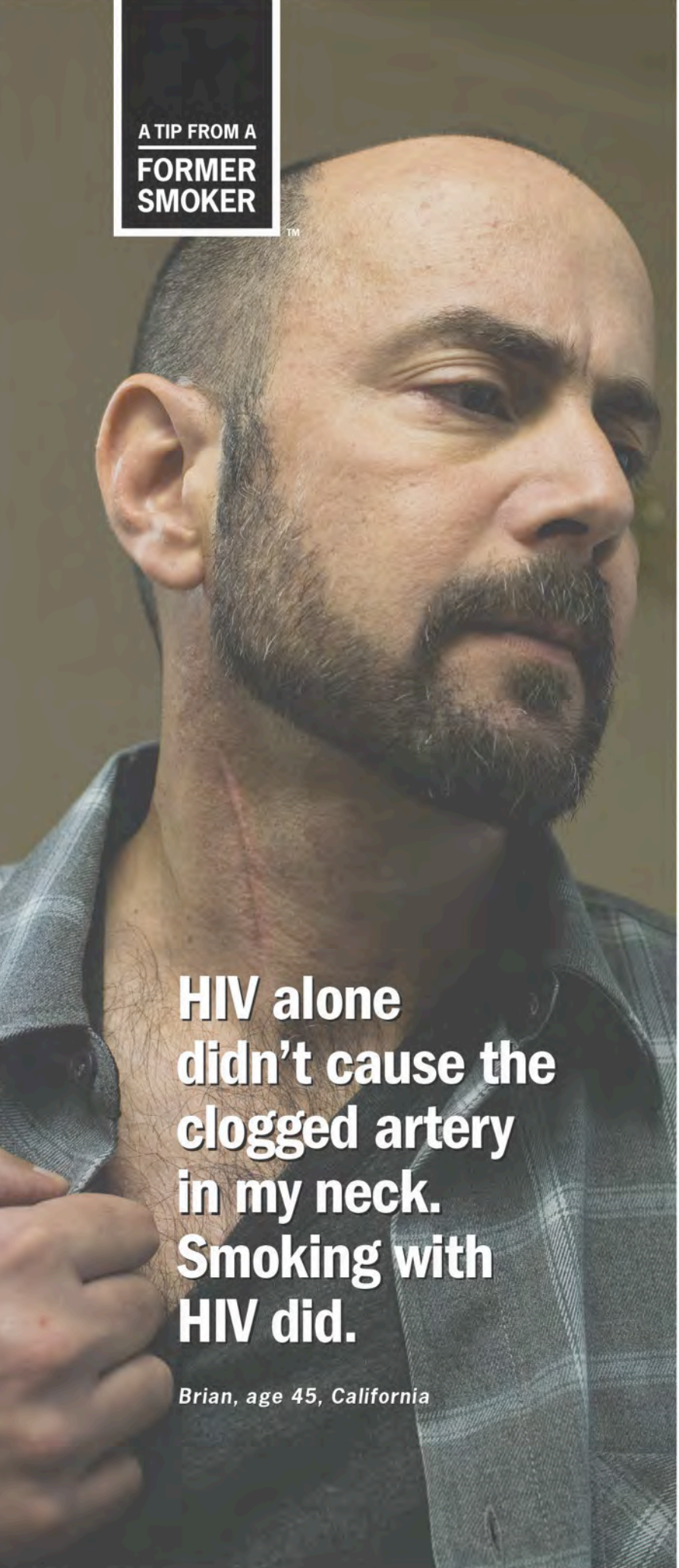
We spoke with Matt Cullen from his home in Los Angeles.

Josh Beisler: What is the biggest lesson you have learned from interviewing so many people who are fighting to live their authentic true selves?
Matt Cullen: The biggest lesson I have learned is the true inner resilience we have as human beings. In the darkest of times, the people I have interviewed have been able to pick themselves up and live an

JB: Is there one key element that all of these people share? Where do they get their strength?
MC: I think it is the want for love and true acceptance. I think it's what we all desire: acceptance for who we are, for how we choose to live our lives, and for who we love. Many of the guests I've had on have lost contact with their family since choosing to live authentically for themselves, and while that is horrible, I think many find their strength through that as well. Realizing that sometimes, when you want to live your life for yourself and no one else, you may lose people in your life. But through that, you find your inner strength. We truly have one life to live, and it's for us to live and no one else.

JB: Is the queer community a true rainbow of acceptance or do we simply co-exist in our own letters (LGBTQ) and labels within the community?
MC: While I would like to think that the queer community is a true rainbow of acceptance, I think, lately, there has been a lot of segregation within the letters of our community. I truly hope that my series helps bridge those separations. We are stronger together as one.

JB: How do you suggest we open our hearts and minds to people in the community we wouldn't normally engage with?
MC: I think the best way to open our hearts and minds to people is to listen. So often, as a society, we are



Brian had his HIV under control with medication. But smoking with HIV caused him to have serious health problems, including a stroke, a blood clot in his lungs and surgery on an artery in his neck. Smoking makes living with HIV much worse. You can quit.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC.gov/tips

#CDCTips

Photo by Ashley Purnell

quick to talk and to put people into a box. If we can just take a minute to listen, to ask questions, to find the similarities, we may come to realize that we are all so much more alike than we would think. My series has opened me up to talking to all different types of people, and I have left every interview feeling so inspired and deeply connected to the person I am interviewing. We may walk very different walks of life, but after our conversation, I'm reminded that we are similar in so many ways.

JB: How many interviews have you done at this point?
MC: I have done over 100 interviews! It has been a life changing experience that has changed who I am as a man.

JB: Do you have a whole team supporting you or is Our Queer Life a one-man operation?
MC: This is completely a one-man operation! It is my everything. I eat, breath, and sleep this show. Editing it, scouting interviews, booking travel, making thumbnails, clipping it for Instagram and TikTok. Our Queer Life takes up every minute of my day, but I wouldn't want to spend my time any other way. Being creative, putting my work out into the world, having these deep conversations; these are the things that keep me truly happy.

JB: Which stories that have meant the most to you?
MC: It's hard to pick what stories have resonated with me the most, but when I think back on my show, I think my time with Mousie has been extremely impactful. Mousie was a street hustler who had spent most of her life in and out of prison. She's a trans woman, and will stand up for anyone in our community that is getting picked on or is in need of someone to help win a fight on the streets. She believed people outside of our community looked at us as weak, as easy targets, so her mission was to show them that we are not to be messed with. She is no longer with us, but I carry her and her stories with me everywhere I go. She always told me how much she believed in me, how I was her little brother, and I feel her with me as the show grows and reaches more people.

JB: What do you hope viewers ultimately take away from the Our Queer Life series?
MC: I simply hope they are reminded how strong, unique, layered, and truly beautiful LGBTQ+ people are. The stories we share on Our Queer Life make me proud to be a part of the community.

New episodes of "Our Queer Life" air weekly on ***youtube.com/@OurQueerLife***

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FRIDAY-SATURDAY: 4-10 PM
SUNDAY: 4-9 PM

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WWW.MIAFRANCESCA.COM

PARADE INFORMATION

DATE: Sunday, June 30th
TIME: 11A.M.

STARTS at: Broadway & Sheridan.

LINE UP: North & South Side of Sheridan from Sheffield to Du Sable Lake Shore Drive. East & West Side of Broadway from Irving Parek to Grace. Clarendon East West Side Cuyler to Broadway. East West Side Fremont to Sheridan.

ROUTE: Proceeds south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

CONTENT & DESCRIPTION: The parade will feature 150 registered entries, including floats, decorated vehicles, performance groups, a marching band and walking contingents.

The entries represent community organizations, businesses, governmental officials and individual community members. Crowd estimates each year are in the hundreds of thousands. So the plans are to line the parade route with barricades on both sides of the street from beginning to the end of the parade route. Spectators will be required to remain behind the barricades. (Only parade registrants traveling down the middle of the street, police officers, other city officials, security staff, parade marshals and credentialed media reps will be allowed in the street). In recent years, the City of Chicago has required that several large city parades, including the Pride Parade, line their parade routes with barricades at our own expense. Police officers and parade marshals will be stationed at various points on the street in front of the barricades along the parade route.

Police officers will also be in the area surrounding the parade. In addition, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence along and surrounding the parade route (please note any of this information is subject to change on the day of the Parade without notice).

$1000 Fine FOR PUBLIC ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION:

The parade will have more security and a tighter rein on public alcohol consumption. In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence. Penalties include, but are not limited to, $1000+ tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcohol into trash receptacles. Public urination is also grounds to receive a ticket.

PARADE DAY HEALTH/ SAFETY:

Bring plenty of bottled water, sunscreen and a hat or other head covering, and dress lightly because parade day is usually hot and sunny.

STREET CLOSURES: (Please pay close attention to no parking signs posted on the parade route for the parade.)

ASSEMBLY AREA: Tentative time: 9 a.m.

PARADE ROUTE: Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close as the parade travels south down the route. The parade starts at 11A.M. at the Broadway/ Sheridan corner proceeding south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

NO PARKING: Both the Assembly Area and Parade Route will be posted with temporary signs indicating ***"NO PARKING ON SUNDAY JUNE 30,2024, Parking restrictions start at 2 a.m. on Sunday, June 30th. Some parking restrictions lift at 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Sunday, June 30th.Check posted temporary parking signs.***

TOWING: Due to the volume of vehicles involved, the issuing of parking violation citations and towing will start at 2 a.m. on Sunday, June 30.

CROSS STREETS: Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close as the parade travels south down the route. After stepping off at 11:00 AM, the parade will take approximately two and one-half hours to finish.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: From the Red Line: Sheridan ((not fully accessible), Addison or Belmont all provide access via a short walk to the parade route.

PLEASE NOTE: The Belmont station (and the surrounding area) tends to become the most crowded, so you are encouraged to consider watching the parade from the other parts of the route, including along Broadway south of Belmont. In addition, a number of lakefront bus routes including the 146 and 151 provide convenient access from the north, the Gold Coast/North Michigan Avenue and downtown to areas east of the parade route.

Extra service will be provided on the "L' on parade day to accommodate the large numbers of people who attend the parade. Due to the increase of local traffic and a number of bus reroutes, potential parade spectators are advised to make use of the L or the various bus routes.

Cooling Buses:
Addison West of Halsted
Roscoe West of Halsted
Belmont East of Broadway
Wilton North of Belmont
Waveland between Broadway & Halsted
Belmont West between Belmont & Clark

Bus ReRoutes:
check cta Bus Tracker or visit
www.transitchicago.com
Other information on public transportation

1-312-322-6900 www.metrarail.com

PEDESTRIAN CROSS-OVER STREETS:
Wellington & Broadway
Briar Place & Broadway
Addison St. at Halsted St.
Roscoe St. at Halsted St.
Wellington Ave. at Broadway
Buckingham at Halsted St.
Cornelia Ave at Halsted St.

At each corner of the streets listed above there will be police officers assigned to assist pedestrians to cross the parade route.

NEEDS AND SPECIAL NEEDS:
Portable Restrooms - are stationed along both the parade line-up street and the parade route. Included at several locations are restrooms for the physically challenged.

Physically Challenged Area/Wheel chair Accessible Area/Seniors - for people who need or want more space: the sidewalks of West Diversey Parkway (near 600 W. Diversey). Traditionally this area of the parade route has fewer spectators than other sections of the parade route. Spectators in these areas generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

Seniors (outdoor) - Diversey & Broadway (600 W. Diversey sidewalks) is a designated OUTDOOR area for seniors. Spectators in this area generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

Chicago Fire Department First Aid Stations:
W. Addison St at Halsted.
Roscoe & Halsted
Broadway &Surf St.
Aldine & Halsted

For more information visit:
www.PrideChicago.org org
Email:
info@pridechicago.org
773-348-8243.

GRAB PRIDE

1. $1000 FINE FOR PUBLIC ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: The parade will have more security and a tighter rein on public alcohol consumption. In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence. Penalties include, but are not limited to $1000+ tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcoholic beverages into trash receptacles. (Public urination is also grounds to receive a ticket).

2. STARTING TIME: The parade starts at 11A.M.. So, arrive early to find a good spot.

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Parking in the area is limited, so walk, take public transportation (or if you must drive, then car pool). For CTA/PACE/Metra transit information, call **1-312-836-7000**; Web Site: ***www.transitchicago.com*** or **1-312-322-6900**, Web Site: **www.metrarail.com** ; Potential spectators are advised to consider making use of RED line el stations including Sheridan Road, Wilson Avenue or Addison Street (The Belmont stop becomes extremely over crowded on parade day).

4. BARRICADES: The parade route will be lined with iron barricades. Spectators will be required to stand behind the barricades, not in the street. Besides the parade registrants traveling down the middle of the street, only police officers, other city officials, security staff, parade marshals and credentialed members of the media will be allowed in the street.

5. PEDESTRIAN CROSS-OVER STREETS: The 9 corners where pedestrians may cross from one side of the parade route to the other side include:.; Grace St. at Halsted St.; Addison St. at Halsted St.; Roscoe St. at Halsted St.; Wellington Ave. at Broadway; Aldine St. at Halsted St. Cornelia Ave at Halsted St; Barry Ave at Broadway.
There will be police officers assigned to assist pedestrians in crossing at these locations. For updates: **www.prideChicago.org**

6. CROWDS: Since the number of spectators have increased dramatically in recent years on Halsted Street, spectators are being advised to try other sections of the parade route to view the parade (for example, Belmont between halstead and broadway). In addition, spectators must watch the parade on the actual parade route, not in the assembly area. (The assembly area is for parade participants only).

7. SAMPLING: City ordinance prevents parade participants from tossing items to spectators. Likewise, spectators should not toss items back to parade participants. Spectators are not allowed to walk into the street to get items. Spectators must wait until parade participants come to the sidelines to hand out items. Parade participants are not allowed to hand out items to spectators who are standing on sidewalks in the assembly area. Spectators who want sample items must view the parade from the parade route, not the assembly area. For safety, no high powered water rifles are allowed.

8. TRASH: Keep the neighborhood clean by using trash barrels provided along the route.

9. NEEDS & SPECIAL NEEDS: Physically challenged/ wheelchair accessible and senior area is provided. See parade website for details. Portable restrooms are placed along parade route.

10. POLICE PERSONNEL ARE ON HAND (as well as parade marshals): In addition, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing security officers to assist. But spectators can be a big help by obeying the above rules and city ordinances in relation to alcohol consumption and other issues.

PRIDE CHICAGO

Parade Route
Chicago 53rd Annual Pride Parade

(The Parade is scheduled each year for the last Sunday in June)

PARADE GRAND MARSHALS

Fortune Feimster & Jax Smith Named Grand Marshals

PRIDEChicago, the all-volunteer organization behind the iconic Chicago Pride Parade for over 50 years, has announced the selection of comedienne, Fortune Feimster and her wife Jax Smith as Grand Marshals for the 2024 Chicago Pride Parade on Sunday, June 30th starting at 11 a.m.

Fortune Feimster, a beloved stand-up comedian, writer, and actor, along with her wife ***Jax***, will lead the procession, bringing their infectious energy and inspiring love story to the heart of Chicago's LGBTQ+ community. With her trademark humor and relatable storytelling, Fortune Feimster has captivated audiences worldwide. Her two one-hour Netflix specials, "Sweet & Salty" and "Good Fortune," have garnered critical acclaim and accolades, including nominations at the Critics' Choice Awards. Feimster's comedic prowess transcends barriers of age, background, and sexual orientation, fostering unity through laughter. In addition to standup, Feimster co-stars alongside Arnold Schwarzenegger in the hit action-comedy series FUBAR on Netflix. She also co-hosts the very popular podcast Handsome with Tig Notaro and Mae Martin.

"We are honored to be named the Grand Marshals for Chicago Pride," said Feimster. "Chicago holds a special place in our hearts—it's home to a great comedy scene and home to the best audiences. It's also where Jax and I first met nine years ago, during Pride. As we celebrate our community and our anniversary, it feels like a beautiful full-circle moment."

The couple's love story began at Chicago Pride in 2015, just days after the Supreme Court's historic ruling for nationwide marriage equality. Since then, they have shared a journey of love and commitment, culminating in their marriage in October 2020.The celebrity comedienne and her wife will join Community Grand Marshals, ***Art Johnston*** & ***Jose 'Pepe' Pena*** and ***Myles*** & ***Precious Brady-Davis.***

Chicago activist and bar owner Art Johnston and his partner in life and business, Jose "Pepe" Pena. The couple, who have been together for 50 years, helped create community – opening the iconic gay bar Sidetrack in 1982 - and fueled a civil rights movement that is still active today. Johnston was an important organizer in passage of Chicago and Cook County human rights legislation and was a co-founder of the Illinois Federation for Human Rights, now known as Equality Illinois. The duo, nationally recognized LGBTQ+ civil

Pepe and Art

rights leaders, are also the subject of an award-winning feature documentary, ART AND PEP.

Longtime LGBTQ+ activists, community organizers and high-profile transgender couple Myles and Precious Brady-Davis. Myles Brady-Davis is communications director of Equality Illinois and Precious Brady-Davis recently became the first Black transgender person appointed to public office in Cook County as well as the first trans person to serve on a water reclamation board in U.S. history. Precious wrote the best-selling book, I Have Always Been Me. The couple married in 2016 and are now raising two children.

Myles and Precious Brady-Davis

The 53rd annual Chicago Pride Parade starts at 11 a.m., Sunday, June 30th 2024 and will travel through Chicago's landmark LGBTQ + neighborhood of Lakeview. Themed "Pride is Power," the parade promises to be a celebration of love, unity, and resilience, reflecting the incredible culture and spirit of the LGBTQ+ community. For more information and the most current updates about the parade, visit ***PRIDEChicago.org.***

Chicago Pridefest
June 22- 23, 2024

Natasha Bedingfield, JoJo Siwa, Sapphira Cristál, Bob the Drag Queen, Amber Riley and Empress Of are headlining this year's Chicago Pride Fest®, taking place June 22nd and 23rd in the city's landmark LGBTQ+ Northalsted community.

More info and schedules at ***pridefestchicago.com.***

43rd PRIDE TORONTO FESTIVAL JUNE 27-30TH

Now, more than ever, the importance of coming together in celebrating Pride Festival 2024 cannot be overstated. Amid numerous global conflicts, violations of human rights both at home and abroad, and a distressing surge in hate crimes across the country, Pride Toronto stands as a beacon of celebration for the shared humanity and solidarity of individuals from all walks of life. It serves as a platform to highlight the ongoing prejudice faced by the diverse and intersecting members of the queer community and continues to advocate for the Human Rights of ALL 2SLGBTQI+ people. "As we prepare to celebrate the 2024 Pride Festival, we do so by acknowledging the ongoing challenges faced by 2SLGBTQI+ communities across Canada. Hate crimes against 2SLGBTQI+ communities are on the rise, and transphobic legislation, policies, and rhetoric are turning back the hard-fought progress that 2SLGBTQI+ people have achieved," said Grant Gonzales and leZlie lee kam, Co-Chairs, Board of Directors. "Pride is a symbol of and platform for our community's power to fight back against the surging hate and discrimination".

As the second-largest Pride festival in the world, Pride Toronto is a pillar of the city's major cultural summer events. Last year, it attracted an estimated 3 million attendees, contributing $589.8 million to the GDP and supporting the creation of 4,748 jobs. This year is expected to be even bigger! Throughout the month of June, it will showcase 700 performers, 13 stages, and 275 hours of programming. The renowned StreetFair on Church St, a weekend-long extravaganza, features over 200 vendors *For more information visit* ***http://www.pridetoronto.com***

NAVY PIER PRIDE SATURDAY JUNE 29

This free, full-day event celebrates diversity, inclusivity, and support for the LGBTQIA+ community. Pier-wide festivities will include live music, dance, and storytelling, educational programs, on-site resources from community partners, and more. The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, The Lakeside Pride Marching Band, and Party Noir will be among dozens of notable acts."

For more information visit **www.navypier.org**

PRIDE SOUTH SIDE CELEBRATES ITS 6TH YEAR WITH "RIGHT TO PRIDE" JULY 6TH, 2024

Pride South Side (PSS) has announced its 6th annual celebration, themed "Right to Pride." This year's festivities will focus on empowering the South Side LGBTQ+ community's agency and voice at the ballot box, highlighting the vital role of civic engagement in the fight for equity and justice.

"The DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center is a proud partner of Pride South Side. We understand the need for safe spaces to celebrate pride and especially center the voices and personhood of our city's BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. Our LGBTQ+siblings are always welcomed at The Du, and we celebrate you today, and honor the community's rich history on the south side of Chicago. Happy pride month," said ***Perri Irmer***, CEO of the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center.

For more information about Pride South Side and a detailed schedule of events, visit ***www.PrideSouthSide.org***

FIERTÉ MONTRÉAL's 18th FESTIVAL GLOW-UP! THE BOLD, BRAVE FESTIVAL WE NEED AUGUST 1-11TH

With its ground-breaking array of artistic talent, iconic Pride Parade, and Community Days, Fierté Montréal Festival, presented by TD Bank Group in collaboration with Loto-Québec, is back August 1 to 11 for an 18th edition that is bolder and more needed than ever to celebrate the creativity and resilience of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities who are facing a resurgence of hatred and oppression.

"This year, our Festival will be organized around three hubs - Urban, Olympic, and Village - allowing us to show our pride in the diversity that unites us to a growing audience," says Simon Gamache, Executive Director of Fierté Montréal. Chris Ngabonziza, Director of Programming and Artistic Development, adds: "Last count, our stages will present a whopping 240 artists, from a wide spectrum of sexual and gender diversity, as well as racialized communities, a true reflection of our city. We invite Montréalers, Québecers, Canadians, and tourists from all over the world to join us for an exceptional edition of the Fierté Montréal Festival."

For mor information visit ***https://fiertemontreal.com***

Chicago Pride Parade Sunday June 30th 11am
PRIDEChicago.org

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WITH ABC7's

JASON KNOWLES

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

AT 11AM

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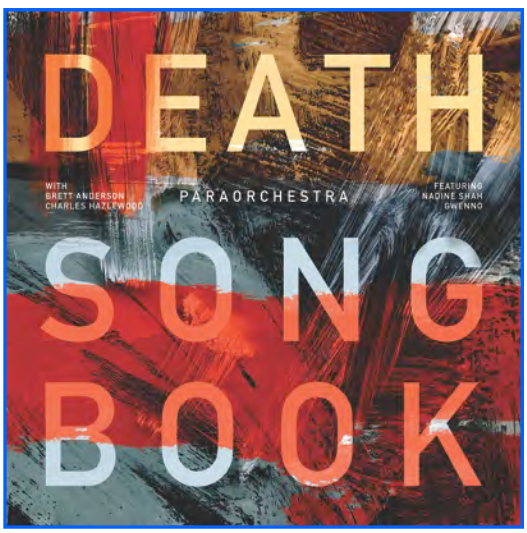
GRAB MUSIC

Q-Music: Sounds of Pride 2024 playlist

By Gregg Shapiro

A new Pet Shop Boys studio album is always cause for celebration, especially because it's been four years since the last one was released. In the interim, PSB released the extraordinary (and aptly titled) "Smash" 2023 box set, easily the duo's most complete hits compilation. On the just-released 10-song vinyl LP "Nonetheless" (Warner/Parlophone), Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe get us on our feet and dancing with opener "Loneliness," "Feel," and "Bullet for Narcissus." Dancing is a theme here, not only sonically, but in song titles including the epic club track "Why am I dancing?" and the lite funk of "Dancing Star," as well as in the slow number "A new Bohemia" (including the line, "Who dances now to their sweet old song?"). The '80s vibe of "New London Boy," which asks the question, "Is everyone gay?" is taken seriously with the inclusion of an '80s-style rap. PSB has always had a way with a beautiful tune, including the previously named "Feel," as well as "The Secret of Happiness" (featuring a full orchestra and harp!).

When Brett Anderson was lead vocalist of the London Suede (the name the band Suede was called in the US following losing a lawsuit brought by lesbian trumpeter Suede who had been using the name for years), he described himself as "a bisexual man who never had a homosexual experience." Sounds gay, he's in! Interestingly, Anderson's former London Suede bandmate Bernard Butler recorded a few albums with gay singer/songwriter David McAlmont as the duo McAlmont & Butler. Anderson's latest music project is **Paraorchestra**, a marvelous collaboration with British conductor Charles Hazlewood, featuring guest artists Nadine Shah, Gwenno, Portishead's Adrian Utley, and Sons of Kemet's Seb Rochford. Paraorchestra's gorgeous new album "Death Songbook" (World Circuit/BMG), available as a double vinyl LP, reimagines songs by Echo & The Bunnymen ("The Killing Moon"), Mercury Rev ("Holes"), Japan ("Nightporter"), Black ("Wonderful Life"), Depeche Mode ("Enjoy The Silence"), Skeeter Davis ("The End Of The World"), Scott Walker ("My Death") and even the London Suede ("She Still Leads Me On," "The Next Life," and "He's Dead," in stunning orchestral arrangements you never realized that the songs required.



These days, it seems like you can't listen to SiriusXMU without hearing "Hand to Hand" by queer singer/songwriter, from her wonderful "Blue Raspberry" album. If you dig that song, you owe it to yourself to explore "Heart of the Artichoke" (Bayonet), the layered new album by **Bloomsday**. Led by non-binary singer/songwriter Iris James Garrison, Bloomsday (which also includes Alex Harwood) are purveyors of glorious enby music that is as lush as it is luminous. Before you know it, you will find yourself singing along to "Virtual Hug," "Where I End and You Begin," "Bumper Sticker," "Artichoke," "Look After," and the subtle twang of "Dollar Slice." The only complaint is that at just over 33 minutes, the 10 songs on this breathtaking album go by much too fast.

Non-binary lesbian singer/songwriter **Torres** (aka Mackenzie Scott, not to be confused with the ex-wife of Jeff Bezos) has returned with "What An Enormous Room" (Merge), their sixth full-length album in 10 years. Down to just Torres, co-producer and multi-instrumentalist Sarah Jaffe (with additional assistance from TJ Allen), you might expect "…Enormous Room" to sound stripped down. On the contrary, these musicians fill up the enormous room with blazing guitars, synths, and other keyboards, and plenty of beats, as you can clearly hear on "Life As We Don't Know It," "Collect," and "Jerk Into Joy." The mesmerizing and

Join us for the annual Navy Pier Pride Celebration on Saturday, June 29! This FREE, full-day event is where diversity, inclusivity, and support for the LGBTQIA+ community take center stage. Experience electrifying live performances from local LGBTQIA+ artists, including **The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, The Lakeside Pride Marching Band, Ariana DJ, and more**!

Whether you're marching, dancing, or cheering from the sidelines, this is a moment to celebrate who you are!

Everyone is welcome because, at Navy Pier, we're MADE FOR YOU.

Scan here for more information.

NAVYPIER.ORG

unexpected piano + vocal closer "Songbird Forever," alternates between an unsettling "you and me" and "you own me" state of mind.

"Neon Cross," the second album by queer country diva **Jaime Wyatt** was one of the best releases of 2020. Produced by Shooter Jennings (son of country music royalty Waylon Jennings and Jessi Colter), the album was as country as can be. Now, Wyatt has returned with her third full-length, the irresistibly soulful "Feel Good" (New West). There is an audible sonic shift, beginning with the album opener "World Worth Keeping." Wyatt, who maintains her country twang and vocal lilt, incorporates a funky, Stax Records vibe on the previously mentioned song, as well as on the title tune, queer love song "Love Is A Place," "Hold Me One Last Time," "Jukebox Holiday," and the Grateful Dead cover "Althea."

Produced by fellow Nashville resident and music legend Kim Richey, "Love I Swore" (31 Tigers) is another fine effort by independent queer singer/songwriter **Amelia**

White. The 11 songs focus on the rockier side of country although the Nashville energy radiates loud and clear on "Nothing I Can Do," "Beautiful Dream" (featuring duet vocals by Ben Glover), the bluesy "Get To The Show," the fabulous vintage country echo of "Can You See Me Now" (featuring Richey), and the pleasingly rhythmic "Lost Myself."

"Creekbed Carter" (Gar Hole) by trans folk artist **Creekbed Carter Hogan** is such an exemplary effort that, at only eight songs in length, listeners might find themselves reduced to begging for more. An accomplished musician, Hogan's plaintive and powerful vocals are the perfect complement to his exceptional songwriting skills. Each song feels like a revelation, and don't be surprised if, as you find yourself listening to songs such as "Lord, Make Me a Scorpion," "If I Was," "Sycamore," and "Apiary," you discover something new with each spin. "The Relic Song" (in which Hogan takes the Catholic Church to task) is simply brilliant.

In the liner notes for "Time and Evolution" **(stephaniesammons.com**), the full-length debut album by queer Dallas-based Americana artist **Stephanie Sammons**, she expresses her gratitude to her "incredible songwriting mentor friends" including Mary Gauthier, Emily Saliers, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Jonatha Brooke, Gretchen Peters, and Suzy Boggus. You can definitely hear the influence and inspiration of those amazing artists throughout the 10 songs, including the standouts "Lazarus," "Make Me Believe," "Innocence Lost," and "Mend." Fans of the late vocalist Ingrid Graudins are sure to be thrilled to hear her voice on the song "Year of the Dog."

Also hailing from the Lone Star State is country-pop duo **The Western Civilization**, featuring queer artist Rachel Hansbro. The pair's lush new album "Fractions of a Whole" (Reggie) is reminiscent of "Translanticism"-era Death Cab For Cutie (take a listen to "She's By The Sea," for example). But there's more to The Western Civilization, and songs including "Bible Verses for Kids," "If You're Lucky," "Noctambulism" (which sounds like a lost Bitch song), "Stitches," "The Ocean's On the Rise," and "Proselytism," are all deserving of praise.

Some readers may recognize the name of nonbinary musician **Zoe Boekbinder** from their time as one-half of the early 21st-century band Vermilion Lies in which they performed with their sibling Max. A transplant from New Orleans to upstate New York, Boekbinder has just released a new album titled "Wildflower" (Are & Be). Evocative opening track "Cover Up The Moon" sets the modern Americana tone, which they sustain on "The Rest of His Days," the queer love song "More Like A Home" (featuring Megan McCormick on lap steel), "You Won't Let Me Go," and the down-home "No Sunshine, No Hurricane." Detours into vintage pop (the Elvis-esque "Hold My Hand") and experimentation ("Garden" and "Supernatural") keep things interesting.

"When It All Goes Down" (Ringleader), the debut album by queer singer/songwriter **Sarah King** is described as "Americana

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Noir," and that's a fitting description. King's powerful voice has a melancholy quality which gives songs including the title track, "Lord Take My Soul," "Blame It On the Booze," "The Moth," and the titular song, a haunting quality. It's also not all that surprising that King covers Led Zeppelin's "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do," and does the band proud in the process.

Gay musician Michael Quercio, whose name readers may recognize from a variety of bands including Game Theory, Permanent Green Light, and The Salvation Army, was also part of L.A.'s Paisley Underground scene of the 1980s which included The Bangles, Rain Parade, Green On Red, and The Dream Syndicate. Quercio, who gets credit for coining the term Paisley Underground, was the lead vocalist for **The Three O'Clock**, an especially popular Paisley Underground quartet. The Three O'Clock's 1982 debut EP "Baroque Hoedown" has been newly reissued in an expanded edition, along with the band's acclaimed 1983 full-length album "Sixteen Tambourines" (both on Yep Roc). When they were initially released, these Three O'Clock platters created a sense of nostalgia that was pleasing during the unpleasantness of the Reagan years. More than 40 years later, the music turns out to be timeless enough to be appreciated by 21st-century ears.

Vivabeat was another L.A. band that was around at the same time as The Three O'Clock. Led by late, queer frontperson Terrance Robay, Vivabeat's sound and style was more closely associated with synth-pop and glam rock. "Party In The War Zone" (Rubellan Remasters), the band's 1980 full-length debut album, featuring Vivabeat's best-known song "Man From China," has been given the reissue treatment, expanding the original release's 10 tracks to 20, with a multitude of bonus material including six that were previously unreleased. Additionally, the 12-track LP, "The House is Burning" (Rubellan Remasters) on purple splatter vinyl, includes another six songs not available on the "Party In The War Zone."

Queer UK trio Autoheart's most recent album of new songs is 2021's "Hellbent." It's not a bad way to become familiar with the band, and tunes such as "I Know He Loves Me," the swirling instrumental "Perestroika," the island beat of "Rabbit in a Headlight," the bouncy "Older" (which sounds like a long-lost Erasure gem), and the sizzling funk of the title cut, are a nice introduction. Equally wonderful and worth owning is the recently released 10th anniversary expanded reissue of **Autoheart**'s 2013 debut album "Punch" (O/R Records). Available on vibrant orange vinyl, the triple LP set features all 15 tracks from the original CD (including the three bonus tracks). There's not a single bit of filler here, with the particularly noteworthy ones "Control," "Agoraphobia," "The Sailor Song," "The Witching Hour," and "Anniversary," deserving of mention. The reissue expands on the initial album offering with eight more songs, such as a live version of "Moscow," as well as acoustic renditions of "Lent," "Stalker's Tango," and "Hungover in the City of Dust." Highly recommended!

Billy Idol isn't queer, but that hasn't stopped countless gay men from fantasizing about him. And why not? Between his sharp cheekbones, pouty lips and accompanying sneer, bedroom eyes, six-pack abs, and penchant for dressing (or being half-undressed) in leather, Idol amassed a considerable queer following beginning with his days in the band Generation X and continuing through his lengthy solo career. "Rebel Yell" (Capitol/UME) Idol's second solo album originally released on Chrysalis in 1983, has been reissued in an expanded double LP vinyl edition featuring eight bonus tracks, including a cover of Rose Royce's "Love Don't Here Anymore," delivered in his trademark growl. Among the nine songs on the original album were some of Idol's highest charting singles, including the title track, "Eyes Without A Face," and "Flesh For Fantasy."

Amy Winehouse wasn't queer, and she had a reputation for spouting unpleasantries toward us when she was soused, but you'd probably need at least 10 fingers or more to count the number of drag queens you've seen doing Amy at a drag show. She even asked an indifferent lover if he was gay on "Stronger Than Me," the opening cut on her 2003 debut album "Frank" (Island/Universal Music Recordings), newly reissued on vinyl as a double LP picture disc set. The 11 numbers, including "Fuck Me Pumps," "In My Bed," "You Sent Me Flying," and "October Song," hinted at what would come next on her acclaimed 2006 "Back to Black" album.

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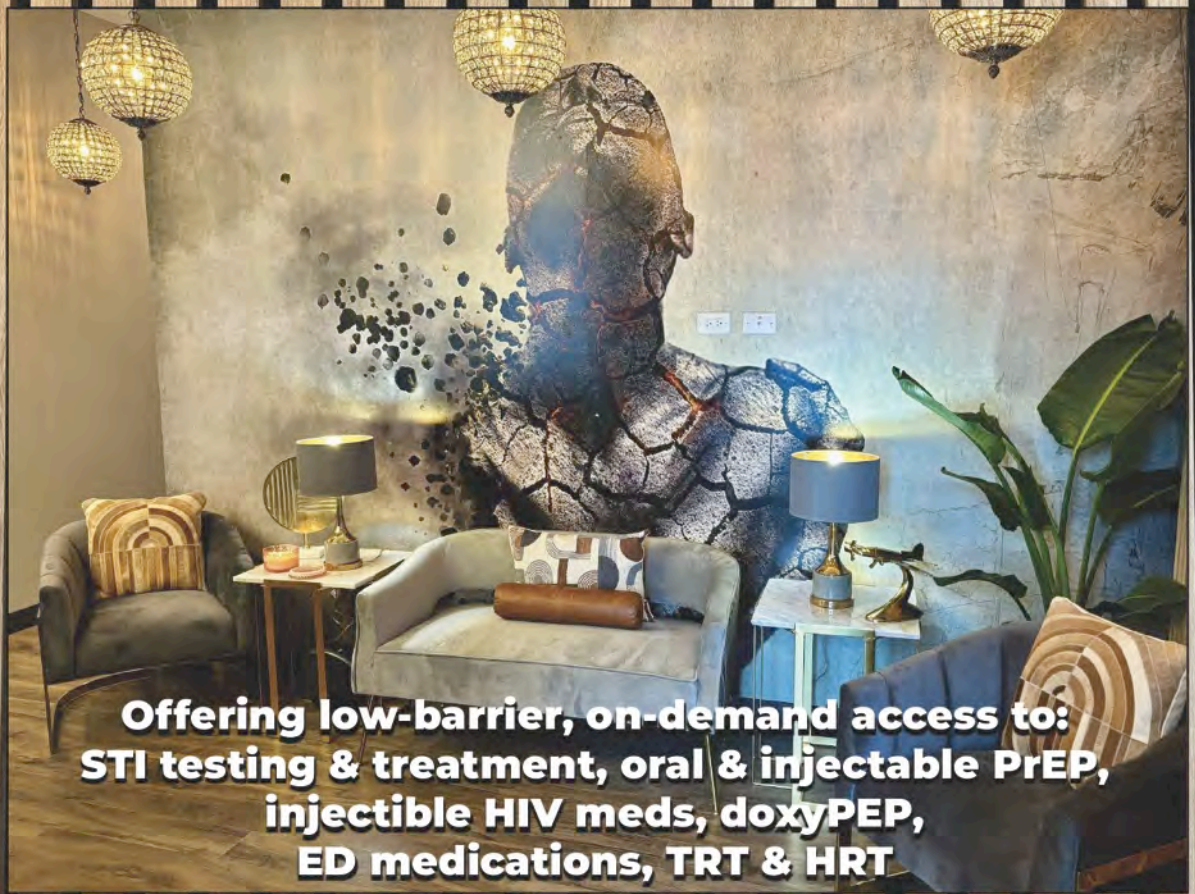

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Ken Brown

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PRIDE 2024

THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 4PM-4AM
BOYZ NIGHT PRIDE EDITION

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 10PM-4AM
FRIDAY NIGHT @ THE BATHS PRIDE EDITION
WITH **DJ HARRY CROSS**

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 11PM-5AM
SATURDAY NIGHT @ THE BATHS PRIDE EDITION
WITH **DJ J-DADDY**

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2PM-8PM
PRIDE SUNDAY NIGHT
WITH **DJRandle*L**

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DJ RNB

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JUL 27

KILLER QUEEN

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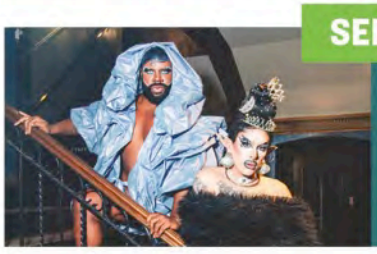
PATRICK MYERS AS **FREDDIE MERCURY**

AUG 11

INDIGO GIRLS MELISSA ETHERIDGE



SEP 14

QUEEN!

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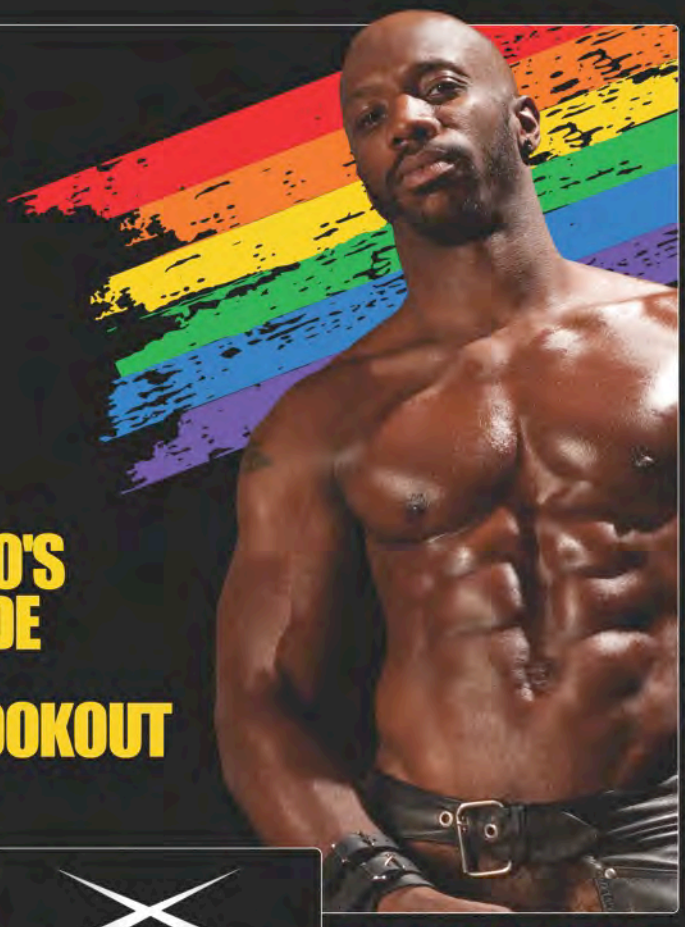
A Guide to Pride

in the Preserves

Join us in June for Pride Month events across the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Celebrate, learn, have fun and spend some time out in nature!

Learn more: fpdcc.com/events

CELEBRATE PRIDE



FRIDAY 6.28

LEATHER PRIDE PARTY

CELEBRATING OUR LOVE OF LEATHER

SATURDAY 6.29

PRIDE GEAR SWAP

A FLEA MARKET FOR KINK / NOON-4PM

LEATHER DISCO

MOVE YOUR ASS WITH DJ HARRY T

SUNDAY 6.30

MARCH WITH CHICAGO'S LEATHER & FETISH PRIDE

STEP OFF AT 11AM

PRIDE BEER BUST & COOKOUT

$2 DRAUGHTS & SODAS ALL DAY

GRILLED EATS 3PM / CLUB ROOM OPEN 5PM

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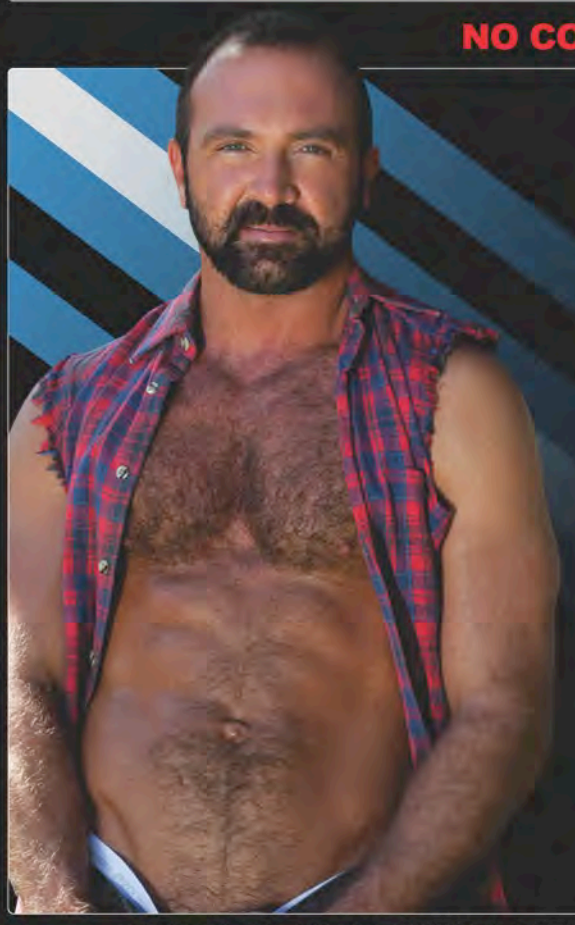

RED, WHITE & BLEW WEEKEND

WEDNESDAY 7.3

JOCKSTRAP NIGHT

THURSDAY 7.4

INDEPENDENCE DAY BEER BUST

$2 DRAUGHTS ALL NIGHT

FRIDAY 7.5

ANNUAL BLOW JOB CONTEST

$100 CASH PRIZE TO WINNER AT MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY 7.6

ALL AMERICAN BEAR NIGHT

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CHICAGO PRIDE FEST
JUNE 22 • SATURDAY
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JOHN DUFF • ALEX LO • CIRCUITMOM
SIXTEEN CANDLES • TOO MUCH MOLLY BAND • ULTRABEAT
THE DIVAS • ETHAN COLE • BEV RAGE & THE DRINKS • DOGGPOUND
MISS TOTO b2b MARY K • SERVIN' FYSH DANCE CO. • BOYJ
SAINT • RYAN WILLING • CHICAGO GAY MEN'S CHORUS
JUNE 23 • SUNDAY
BOB THE DRAG QUEEN • AMBER RILEY
EMPRESS OF • MAX RAE • ALEX LAHEY • AYA ITO
DANCING QUEEN: AN ABBA SALUTE • AVI SIC • NANOOS
AZN INVZN: CHESS KNIGHT, CZ BOOGIE, SUPES BASE
SASHA LOVE • VIRAGO • DJ CA$H ERA • PLATINUM CARRINGTON
RHEA THE SECOND • COBRA B • BUSSY KWEEN POWER TRIP
VJ BRYAN • FIREBRAND • LAURA B • DJ X-TASY
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CHICAGO PRIDE FEST

JUNE 22-23

presented by NORTHALSTED

SATURDAY

NORTH STAGE

DJ Laura B	12:00
Drag Showcase	1:00
JoJo Siwa	2:00
Drag Showcase	2:30
Servin' Fysh Dance Co.	3:30
Kaleena Zanders	4:00
Ultrabeat	5:00
Drag Showcase	6:45
Sapphira Cristál	7:30
John Duff	8:15
Natasha Bedingfield	9:15

WAVELAND STAGE

Ryan Willing	1:00
Saint	2:30
Miss Toto b2b Mary K	4:00
Doggpound	5:00
Ethan Cole	6:30
CircuitMOM Experience ft. Alex Lo	8:00

SOUTH STAGE

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus	1:00
Chicago Spirit Brigade	2:00
Bev Rage & The Drinks	2:30
The Divas	4:00
Too Much Molly Band	6:00
Sixteen Candles	8:00
Host BoyJ	

TEEN PRIDE SPACE

CENTER ON HALSTED 3656 N. HALSTED

Walgreens

11am-6pm at Broadway & Waveland

SUNDAY

NORTH STAGE

12:00	Register: Proud Pet Parade
12:30	Firebrand
1:00	Drag Showcase
2:00	Bob the Drag Queen
2:45	Drag Showcase
4:00	Alex Lahey
5:15	Dancing Queen: An ABBA Salute
6:50	Drag Showcase
8:00	Max Rae
9:00	Amber Riley

WAVELAND STAGE

1:00	DJ X-tasy
3:30	Ca$h Era
5:00	VJ Bryan
6:30	Virago
8:00	Avi Sic

SOUTH STAGE

12:30	Chicago Spirit Brigade
1:00	Proud Pet Parade Awards
	Peach ON-AIR
1:30	Bussy Kween Power Trip
1:50	Breberries & Friends
3:00	Aya Ito
3:30	Rhea the Second
4:00	B.Blyss! Takeover ft. Sandra Suave, DJ Feen & Ayodele Drum & Bass
5:30	Cobra B
6:30	Empress Of
7:15	Nanoos
8:15	AZN INVZN: Chess Knight, Supes Base, CZ Boogie & Dim Sum & Drag

ENTRY GATES AT

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GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials;

MONDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor), Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***.@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlies:*** Bingo 7 – 11 pm Dancing until close***. Hydrate:*** Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm.. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Well Drinks.***Shakers on Clark:*** Comedy Night $1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. ***Steamworks:*** Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons. Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend. Beer Bust $2Bud/Bud Light Drafts Cook Out 3-6pm ClubRoom Opens at 6pm,

TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $3 House Shots, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***.@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlie's:*** Tune Up Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. ***Hydrate:*** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $3 House Shots, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm–8pm: $5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. ***Shakers on Clark:*** $3 Domestic Beers. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. ***Steamworks:*** Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Amsterdam Cocktails, $5 Tallboys Everyday Specials:,$5Jager, $5 Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm - 4am***.***Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi.

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $ New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Tallboy Beers Specials: Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlie's:*** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. ***Jackhammer:*** $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $4Miller Lite Drafts, $5 Stolis (All Flavors). Happy Hour Specials 7pm–10pm: $6 Any BIG drafts Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am $5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. ***Shakers on Clark***: Karaoke Night $1 Off Long Islands. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor & Ariana 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Britney & Rihanna last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. ***Steamworks:*** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $3 House Shots, $5 Tito's Cocktails, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)FreeDarts ***Touche:***Open 5pm - 4am. Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons . Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***. @mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. ***Charlie's:*** Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. ***Jackhammer:*** $3 House Shots $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Miller Lit Tallboys Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis..***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $6 Tito Cocktails, Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. ***Shakers on Clark:*** $1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks,Karaoke 10pm-1am. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursdays with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am. ***Steamworks:*** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm - 4am.Throwback Thursdays70's & 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo. 70's & 80's Music.

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm–6pm: $4 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlie's:*** 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p – 1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p – 1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p – 1am, 5th Fierce Fridays – Strut 10p – 1am, Dancing until close. ***Jackhammer:*** $5 Miller Lite Tallboys $8 New Amsterdam & Redbull Happy Hour Specials 5–9pm: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons $5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $6 Tito's Cocktails $7.50 Big Miller Lites. Happy Hour Specials.5pm–8pm: $5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $3 House Shots, $7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 3pm–6pm: $4 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tall Boys Beers (Buch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. ***Touche:*** 6/21 Cowboy RoundUp Full Moon, 6/28 Leather &Fetish Pride Party.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: ½ Off All Drafts $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. ***Baton Show Lounge:*** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 2pm-3am. ***Charlie's:*** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. ***Jackhammer:*** $3 House Shots $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials 5–9pm: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons$5 Chicago HandshakeEveryday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. Jackhammer: $3 House Shots $5 Miller Lite TallBoys Happy Hour Specials: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons. Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $5 Signature Margaritas Happy Hour Specials.2pm–5pm: $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $12 Mimosa Carafes, Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games with Sasha & Zamora Love 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, $5 Signature Margaritas, Happy Hour Specials: 12pm–3pm: ½ Off All Drafts Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 2pm - 5am. 6/22 RIpe Party Dim Lights Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T. 6/29 Leather Disco Party.

SUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Signature Margaritas, $6 Chicago Handshakes Happy Hour Specials 2pm–5pm $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***@mosphere:*** $6 Jack Products, $4 Domestic Draft, House Shots $2. ***Baton Show Lounge:*** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 2pm-2am ***Charlie's:*** Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singsational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. ***Hydrate:*** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. ***Jackhammer:*** $5 New Amsterdam CoctKails $7 Jackhammered Long Islands Happy Hour Specials :1st Sunday: $7 Planter's Punch2nd Sunday: $5 Dog Bowls (Premium Well) 3rd Sunday: $3 Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's Tallboy Beers4th Sunday: $5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor)5th Sunday: $6 New Amsterdam & Red BullEveryday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm $8.95 Martinis.***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $3 House Shots, $12 Mimosa Carafes. Happy Hour Specials:7pm–10pm: $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm ***Shakers on Clark***: $1 off Bloody Mary's, $1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And $1 off all Revolution beers. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am ***The Sofo Tap:*** $6 New Amsterdam Cocktails $7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 12pm–2pm: $3 Miller Lite Drafts 1pm–3pm: $3 House Shots FREE Chicago-style hot-dogs (while supplies last) Everyday Specials $5Jager, Fireball & Malort.$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust $2 Bud Light Drafts, $2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm. 6/30 Pride Parade Day Beer Bust.

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GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of June

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	Artist	Title
1	Oddkidout x Angrybaby x Nina Sung	Dumb
2	David Guetta & Mason vs Princess Superstar	Perfect
3	Morgin Madison & Ryan Lucian & Jas.	Tell Me Who You Are
4	Kryder	Fade Till Sunrise
5	Blanke & Grant	Heavy Heart Ft. Your Friend Polly
6	Pls&Ty	Party In My Head Ft. Lost Boy
7	Silk & Evalina	Last Time
8	Skye Holland	Just Wanna Dance
9	Morgan Page & Telykast	Dancing All Alone
10	Lucas & Steve X Lawrent	End Of Time Ft. Jordan Shaw
11	Vaance	Something Good
12	Kastra & Alex Byrne	Denial
13	Allegra	Love You Right Back (Alok Radio Remix)
14	Cheat Codes x Two Friends	The Way It Is
15	Timmy Trumpet	Best Thing (Ookay Remix)
16	Kane Brown x Mashmello	Miles On It
17	James Chris & Chris Willis	Eyes Wide Open (Radio Mix)
18	Zen Freeman	No Sleep
19	Tiesto	Both ft. Bia
20	Codeko & Bertie Scott	So High
21	Alok & Bebe Rexha	Deep In Your Love (Radio Edit)
22	Breathe Carolina & Nikki Vianna	Dumb
23	Wankelmut	Carousel ft. Plant
24	Sofi Tukker	Throw Some Ass (Clean Edit)
25	Paige x Jeh	When I Dream ft. Darla Jade
26	Mattilo x Julian	Thinkin' Bout U
27	Z3LLA	Why Should I (Radio Edit)
28	Vassy	Krazy
29	Brando	Too Close
30	Manyfew	Nrg

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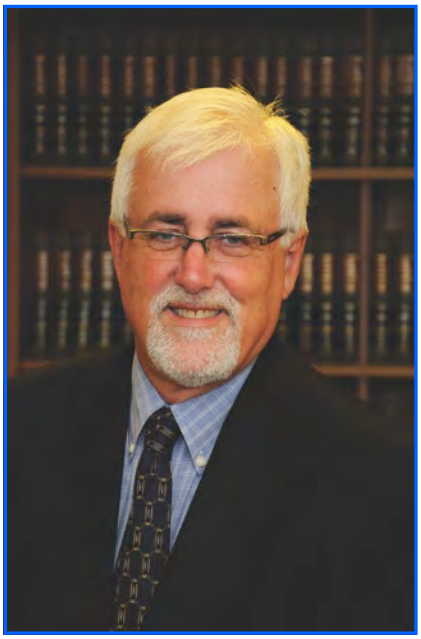
Pride Is Power / Stand Up, Stand Proud



By Roger V. McCaffre-Boss, Esq.

In the 45 years that I have been an attorney, I have witnessed the growing trend for professionals to come out of the closet, band together to further their careers and businesses and battle discrimination in the workplace. Everywhere people are forming support groups to provide needed business contacts, job referrals and mutual support.

I have seen LGBT persons from all different aspects of life build a tradition of helping each other by working together to advance their professions and businesses and promote their status in society. All over the country LGBT people are organizing support groups in their various professional fields to keep their members abreast of innovations in their field and alert each other to the availability of jobs through newsletters and group meetings.

The growing network of business contacts and support groups not only provide economic benefits to LGBT persons but also help deal with the stress, alienation and discrimination at work.

Discrimination acts to alienate us from society and lessens our job performance and careers. It is discrimination that promotes the fear that if it's discovered that someone is LGBT, they'll be rejected by their fellow employees and be fired. Working together in our community, however, helps us deal with this hostility, improve our self-esteem and increase our sense of pride so that we will feel worthwhile and succeed in our jobs and professions.

The strongest tool of LGBT pride is the effective use of the "gay dollar." By supporting local LGBT businesses and professionals, the true economic clout of the LGBT community can be felt.

For each dollar spent with a LGBT business or professional, be it a doctor, lawyer, accountant, real estate broker, etc. that business or professional can return those dollars back into the LGBT community by supporting other businesses and hiring LGBT persons who can be paid a living wage to be able to live openly and outside of the closet.

Each LGBT business or professional can in return support local gay publications through advertisements and with fundraisers' support, those community organizations that stand up for LGBT rights and provide needed services for those in need. It is the community organizations that present the first line of defense to ignorance and intolerance.

Each day there are still battles for civil and legal rights that must be fought by all LGBT persons. To give up that fight would be to surrender to ignorance and prejudice; only by our standing proud, setting the example of acceptance will there be economic success. It is from our diversity and differences that our strength and unity is nourished.

Everyone can work for and support local organizations which are committed and established to serve the needs of LGBT persons and advancing the cause for civil rights. The example of strong, well supported and effective community organizations will make those whose intent it is to reverse the progress of LGBT rights to seriously reconsider their stance or be subject to intense, united opposition.

All people can show the unity of the community by their commitment to work together and accept each other for their differences as well as their commonness. Be it someone who dresses in leather, clothing of the opposite sex, tattooed, pierced or in a business suit; pride must never be allowed to die. To exclude anyone who is LGBT because they look or act different buys into the same prejudice of society that we battle against. Our acceptance of everyone's differences sets the example for others of how we should be treated. We cannot expect others to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. Pride is Power.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a gradute of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at ***RVMLawyer@aol.com****. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.*

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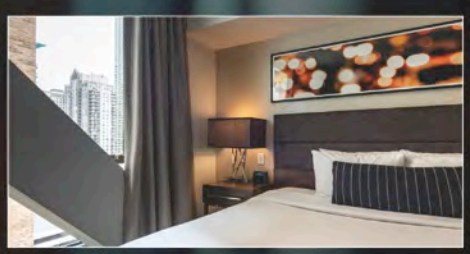

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GRAB HOLLY

A Ghostly Frolic

By Holly Maholm

Queen Penelope was napping in the apple orchard at the Horse Rescue, and I had the honor of waiting upon her, seeing to her safety and serenity while she slept. My mind wandered during the silence, but when Her Majesty woke up, she glanced over at me and inquired, "A penny for your thoughts, Holly."

"I was just considering," I replied, "that currently, cable television is replete with countless 'documentaries' wherein groups of self-taught 'ghost-hunters' visit abandoned hospitals, prisons and insane asylums seeking evidence – meaning 'videos' – of ghosts. Viewers cannot get enough of more-or-less credible ghostly apparitions, and there seems to be evidence that some of these ghosts-hunters do sometimes find actual ghosts."

"Yes," the Queen agreed, "you humans are fascinated by ghosts, so long as you do not have to share a home or apartment with one." "Your Majesty," I continued, "there is one question I want to ask, which is: Does it ever happen that a member of the Species Unicorn takes up residence in the afterlife and lives out eternity as a ghostly unicorn? In short: Can unicorns become ghosts?"

Queen Penelope looked at me with an amused smile and responded, "Oh, Holly! Sometimes you ask the silliest questions! Though I have never heard of any ghostly unicorn haunting any abandoned stable or barn, I can tell you of one instance in which members of your species were confronted with an entire frolic of ghostly unicorns! Here is what happened…

"The events of which I speak occurred shortly after the end of your Civil War, and they happened right here in Wellington. I was – even then – queen of our local frolic, and one of the human members of my frolic was a woman named Abigail, who told me what was occurring in our town. Young men of our village were returning from the war, and a rather large encampment of them was to be found at the far corner of the village square, which was then undeveloped. "Now, it happened that veterans from our village had seen action in the Union cavalry, and this encampment became a magnet for veterans from other towns who had likewise served in the cavalry. At the time, I asked Abigail why these men did not return to their homes, farms and professions, and she told me this… She said there was one man who was the unofficial, unelected leader of those veterans – his name being Elias – who refused to return to his place in human society. "Elias explained himself thusly, 'These men and I were in the cavalry, and we fought at the Battle of Brandy Station. This was the Civil War's largest cavalry battle, involving some 18,000 soldiers – both Union and Confederate – and their mounts. We soldiers were armed with sabers and pistols, but not one of those men – and none of their horses – worn any form of armor. Why, even soldiers serving in the army of Alexander the Great had armor, but there was nothing at Brandy Station for man nor beast!'

"'Casualties were appalling!' he continued. 'At any other battle a soldier might have aimed his pistol at an enemy soldier, but at Brandy Station he could more easily bring down his foe by shooting his enemy's horse. The result was, there were far more horses killed on both sides than soldiers, and when hostilities were over, the battlefield was littered with countless dead and dying animals.'"

"Elias declared that he could have forgiven his fellow humans for killing a large number of their own species, since each one of them had some reason they went to war, and most believed in the justice of their cause, but he couldn't justify the great number of horses who died for reasons they could never understand.

"I heard his words," the Queen continued, "and here is how I and my frolic responded. Late one night, when the veterans were sitting around their campfires, I instructed the members of my frolic to disguise themselves so as to be entirely invisible to humans. Then, I led my frolic out into the road surrounding the village square, where the men in their tents could hear us. There, we circled the square repeatedly, some of us walking, some trotting, and some of us stumbling with a broken gait, so the men could hear the sounds of what seemed to them to be dozens and dozens of ghostly horses patiently waiting for the soldiers who had once served with them in battle.

"Within hours, Elias called out to his brother cavalrymen, declaring, 'Men! We have heard the hoofbeats of our most loyal and trusting mounts, and those sounds speak to us of their love and gratitude for our sacrifice – and theirs. Now, let us resume our lives, and know they will be waiting for us in that great and forgiving hereafter."

(*To be continued)*

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly's book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly's adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message

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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Mean Boys: A Personal History" *by Geoffrey Mak*
c.2024,Bloomsbury$28.99
267 pages

This and that.

It's how a pleasant conversation is fed, with give and take, back and forth, wandering casually and naturally, a bit of one subject easing into the next with no preamble. It's communication you can enjoy, like what you'll find inside "Mean Boys" by Geoffrey Mak.

Sometimes, a conversation ends up exactly where it started.

Take, for instance, Shakespeare's King Lear, which leads Mak to think about his life and his inability to "cull the appropriate narratives out of nonsense..." Part of that problem, he says, was that his living arrangements weren't consistent. He sometimes "never really knew where I was living," whether it was Berlin or California, in a studio or high-end accommodations. The parties, the jokes, the internet consumption were as varied as the homes and sometimes, "it didn't really matter." Sometimes, you have to accept things and just "move on."

When he was twelve years old, Mak's father left his corporate job, saying that he was "called by God" to become a minister. It created a lot of resentment for Mak, for the lack of respect his father got, and because his parents were "passionately anti-gay…" He moved as far away from home as he could, and he blocked all communication with his parents for years, until he realized that "By hating my father, I ended up hating myself, too..."

And then there was club life which, in Mak's descriptions, doesn't sound much different in Berghain (Germany) as it is in New York. He says he "threw myself into night life," in New York Houses, in places that gave "a skinny Chinese kid from the suburbs... rules I still live by," on random dance floors, and in Pornceptual. Eventually this, drugs, work, politics, pandemic, basically everything and life in general led to a mental crisis, and Mak sought help.

"I don't know why I'm telling you all this," Mak says at one point. "Sometimes life was bad, and sometimes it wasn't, and sometimes it just was."

Though there are times when this book feels like having a heart-to-heart with an interesting new acquaintance, "Mean Boys" can make you squirm. For sure, it's not a beachy-read or something you'll breeze through in a weekend.

No, author Geoffrey Mak jumps from one random topic to another with enough frequency to make you pay super-close to attention to his words, lest you miss something. That won't leave you whiplashed; instead, you're pulled into the often-dissipated melee just enough to feel almost involved with it – but with a distinct sense that you're being held at arms' length, too. That some stories have no definitive timeline or geographical stamp – making it hard to find solid ground – also adds to the slight loss of equilibrium here, like walking on slippery river rock.

Surprisingly, that's not entirely unpleasant but readers will want to know that the ending in "Mean Boys" could leave their heads swirling with a dozen thoughts on life, belonging, and death. If you like depth in your memoirs, you'll like that... and this.

"Preserved: A Cultural History of the Funeral Home in America" by Dean G. Lampros c.2024, Johns Hopkins University Press $34.95
374 pages

Three bedrooms upstairs. That's a minimum.

You need a big kitchen, a large back room would be a bonus, you want lots of bathrooms, and if you can get a corner lot, that'd be great. The thing you need most is a gigantic all-purpose room or maybe a ballroom because you're planning on a lot of people. As you'll see in the new book "Preserved" by Dean G. Lampros, not all living rooms are for the living.

Not too long ago, shortly after he took a class on historic preservation, Dean Lampros' husband dragged him on a weekend away to explore a small town in Massachusetts. There, Lampros studied the town's architecture and it "saddened" him to see Victorian mansions surrounded by commercial buildings. And then he had an epiphany: there was once a time when those old mansions housed funeral homes. Early twentieth-century owners of residential funeral homes were, in a way, he says, preservationists.

Prior to roughly World War II, most funerals were held at home or, if there was a need, at a funeral home, the majority of which were located in a downtown area. That changed in 1923 when a Massachusetts funeral home owner bought a large mansion in a residential area and made a "series of interior renovations" to the building. Within a few years, his idea of putting a funeral home inside a former home had spread across the country and thousands of "stately old mansions in aging residential neighborhoods" soon held death-industry businesses. This, says, Lampros, often didn't go over well with the neighbors, and that resulted in thousands of people upset and lawsuits filed. Some towns then passed ordinances to prohibit such a thing from happening to their citizens. Still, funeral home owners persevered. Moving out of town helped "elevate" the trade, and it allowed Black funeral home operators to get a toehold in formerly-white neighborhoods. And by having a nice – and nice-sized – facility, the operators were finally able to wrest the end-of-life process away from individuals and home-funerals...

Here's a promise: "Preserved" is not gruesome or gore-for-the-sake-of-gore. It's not going to keep you up all night or give you nightmares. Nope, while it might be a little stiff, it's more of a look at architecture and history than anything else.

From California to New England, author Dean G. Lampros takes readers on a cruise through time and culture to show how "enterprising" business owners revolutionized a category and reached new customers for a once-in-a-deathtime event. Readers who've never considered this hidden-in-plain-sight, surprising subject – or, for that matter, the preservation or re-reclamation of those beautiful old homes – are in for a treat here. Despite that the book can lean toward the academic, a good explanatory timeline and information gleaned from historical archives and museums offer a liveliness that you'll enjoy.

This book will delight fans of little-know history, and architecture junkies will drool over its many photographs. "Preserved" is the book you want because there are other ways to make a house a "home."

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GRAB JOEY

Joey Arrigo Is Raising Temps This Summer With His Fiery New Dance Single, “Get Down”

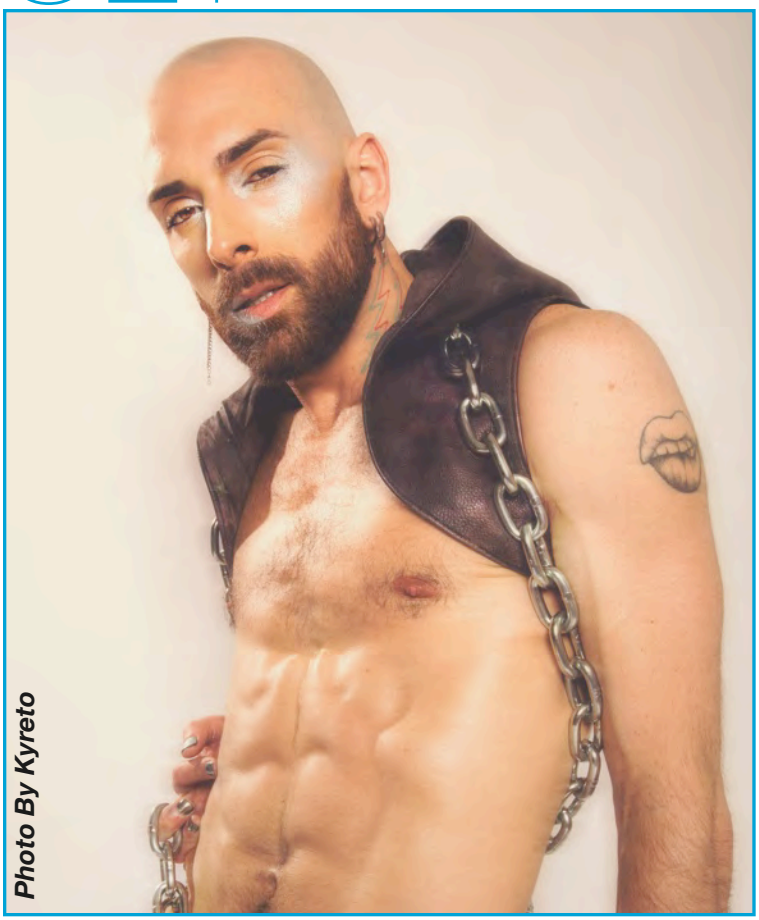

Photo By Kyreto

By Larry Olsen

Joey Arrigo discovered his love of dance at four-years-old when his sister was enrolled in ballet. “I stood at the door of the class with fire in my eyes, desperate to be in it myself,” he recalls. At five-years-old, he discovered a VHS recording of Cirque du Soleil’s 1989 show Nouvelle Experience and was so captivated by it, he taught himself the contortionist act – or rather, a simulation of it – that he reenacted for his family in his living room.

Twenty years later he would find himself in the real Cirque du Soleil, featured in their Kooza show and playing the principal character in Volta. He has since appeared in Disney's Sharpay's Fabulous Adventure and Canada’s So You Think You Can Dance.

This summer, Joey Arrigo is combining his love of dance with a newfound passion in music. He’s out with “Get Down”, a track inspired by his love of 80s synth pop and early 2000s pop, about learning to succumb to movement and pleasure.

Larry Olsen:We love your new look, Joey!

Joey Arrigo: It is a very honest look at who and where I am in my life at 32 years old. I wanted to take this opportunity to show myself and everyone around me that bald is sexy. Sure, I don’t have the full hair I once had, but I’ve learned that I have a great shaped skull, this pretty face, brows shaped to the gods, a full beard and a body that continues to serve me in so many ways.

LO: It's a delicious mix of masculine and feminine.

J.A: That I get to define! As long as I am able to feel good about the way I look and connect to my appearance, it only makes sense that this is who I am supposed to be in the moment.

L.O:You are best known for your work in Cirque du Soleil.

J.A: Being a part of two Cirque du Soleil shows, traveling on tour with the company for six years, was a huge achievement for me as a dancer because it was something I had wanted since I could remember. It was the driving force behind my motivation as a young artist and it felt like reward to be able to perform on those stages.

L.O: Did you make any mistakes in the beginning of your choreography career?

J.A: My brain always resorts to doing more to try and please audiences. It took me a good while in my artistic existence to honor stillness, breath, and simplicity. I was able to bring this learned aspect of dance into my choreography. The majority of audiences won’t understand the complexities and high-level skills it takes to perform advanced technical skills. They will be impressed by it, for sure. But choreography that is jam packed with stuff, inevitably, falls flat.

L.O: What inspired you to step up to the mic and sing?

JA: I joined the cast of Rock of Ages in Toronto and sang with artists from the music industry. Through discussions on techniques and skills, I began to embrace my identity as a singer.

L.O: How did you choose the

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sound for your own music?
JA: My latest track, "Get Down," was produced by Velvet Code with So Fierce Music Productions. The sound came from the energy we wanted the song to exude. We wanted this electric pop, rock sound that brought sexual energy that made people want to dance.

L.O: It's a very catchy song!
J.A: I wanted to create something that people would hear just once and instantly feel connected to. Anytime I play the first few beats of the song for anyone, I watch as they find fire in their eyes as that dark sexy energy takes over them. It is exactly what we wanted!

L.O: The remixes are fire too.
J.A: I wanted "Get Down" to exist and thrive on all types of dance floors. We collaborated with some of the most amazing DJs working today including DJ Dan Slater, Ray Rhodes, Shimmy G and Virasco, Erick Ibiza and GSP.

L.O: What is it about high energy dance music that makes people forget their problems?
J.A: We feel good when we have a rush of energy through our body. Escaping to the dancefloor gives our bodies that treat of pleasure to rebalance ourselves and embrace energy that allows us to live lighter and happier.

L.O: If you could change one thing about yourself, Joey, what would it be?
J.A: Nothing! Me is pretty fucking awesome.

L.O: On what occasion do you lie?
J.A: I'll lie to save someone from getting hurt.

L.O: If you could live anywhere on the planet, where would you live?
J.A: I always have the fantasy of learning Japanese and moving to Japan.

L.O: Can you tell us a little about your work with CANFAR and why it's so important to you?
J.A: I recently become a national ambassador for The Canadian Foundation for Aids Research and I am planning to use my platform to share how art played a huge part in helping me process my diagnoses. I had a safe space to talk through my journey and to use my skills and passions to help me learn about what my mind, body and spirit are going through, while at the same time, I get to share with others and relate to their experiences as well.

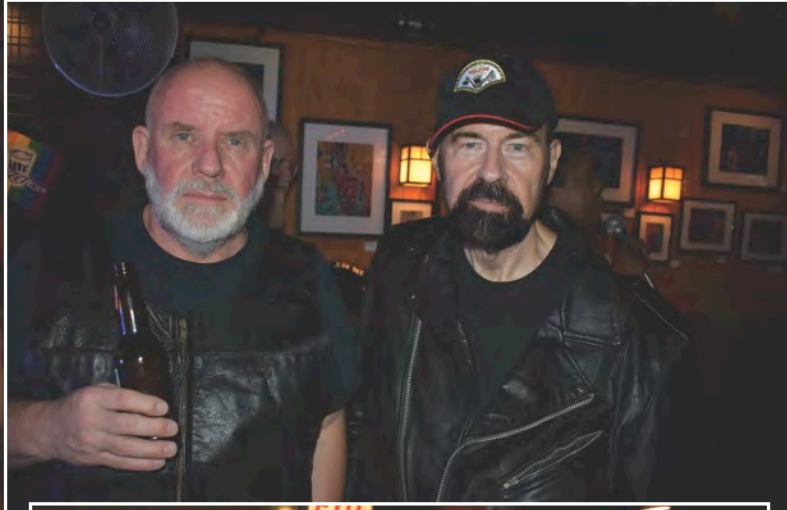
Photo By Kyreto

L.O: What is your message to someone who has been newly diagnosed?
J.A: HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence; it is a chronic condition. You get to keep being your sexy, charming self while spreading love, acceptance and awareness of HIV for everyone in your community. Everybody has moments that make them reevaluate their life. Most people don't think about those things until later. It is a blessing to gain a beautiful perspective on the world around you. Life is full of opportunity that can all be yours.

L.O: What's next for you?
J.A: I want "Get Down" to be spinning at every club all summer and for the next twenty years. I want to create more music with 10x the budget and I don't want to have to pay for it myself! Where are the rich sugar daddies who like art and sexy gay boys?

L.O: Are you looking for someone to "Get Down" with this summer?
J.A: I recently separated from my partner. It was difficult because I love him more than anything or anyone in the world, but we are at different stages in life and want different things. While I welcome as much romance, love, passion and connection into my life as I can, the only person I'm going to get down with this summer… is Joey.

Joey Arrigo's "Get Down" and its remixes are available on Spotify, Apple Music and streaming platforms via So Fierce Music/The Orchard/Sony Music Entertainment. Visit GetDownwithJoey.com. Follow Joey Arrigo on Instagram @ getdownwithjoey



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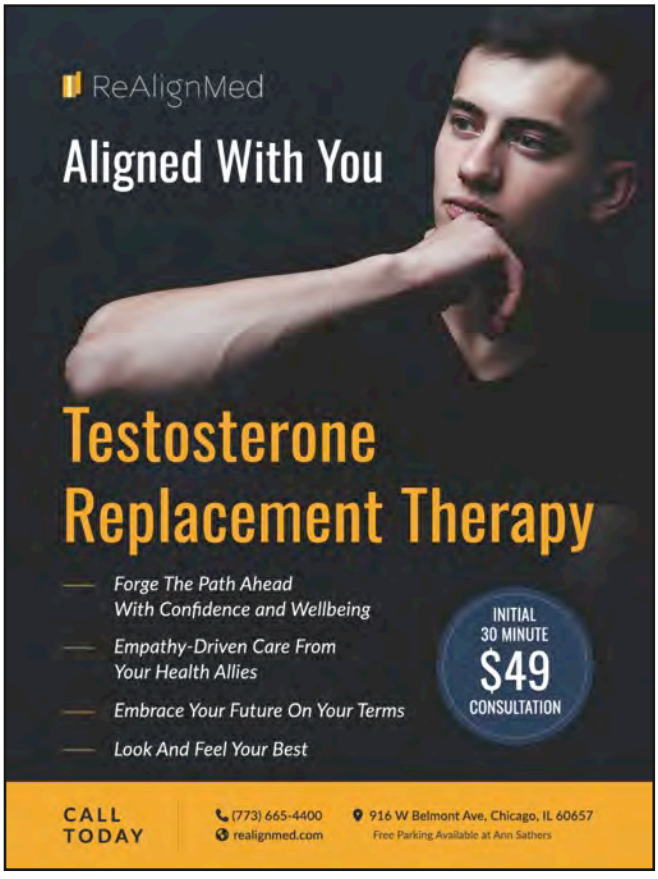
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CHICAGO STORIES: THE OUTRAGE OF DANNY SOTOMAYOR

Chicago AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor speaks at a rally. (Photo By Lisa Howe-Ebright)

Danny Sotomayor was a man on a mission. The fiery openly gay AIDS activist, political cartoonist, and organizer took to the streets, using civil disobedience to wage war on city officials who marginalized the LGBTQ community and turned a blind eye to the AIDS crisis – all while fighting a losing battle with the disease himself. WTTW's documentary CHICAGO STORIES: THE OUTRAGE OF DANNY SOTOMAYOR profiles a man who wouldn't take no for an answer – who channeled his rage and pain into a movement to effect positive change on Friday, June 28 at 9:00 pm and streaming on ***wttw.com*** and the PBS app now.

Danny Sotomayor received what amounted to a death sentence in 1988 – he was diagnosed with AIDS. At the time, there was no cure, drugs designed to combat the disease were expensive and hard to come by, and people often died within weeks of the first failures of their immune systems. Feeling the clock ticking on his life, the 29-year-old cartoonist set out to confront the AIDS crisis as only he knew how: by making a spectacle.

Sotomayor, as the founder of the Chicago chapter of ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, staged effective, carefully targeted, and highly theatrical acts of civil disobedience to confront the slow approval of life-preserving drugs, homophobic messaging from church leaders and city officials, and the exclusion of people with AIDS from research panels. As much as anyone, Sotomayor, with his persistent chant of "Act up, fight back, fight AIDS!" embodied the ethos.

When Sotomayor climbed out on an overhang of the County Building with four other activists in April 1990, unfurling a hand-painted reading "We Demand Equal Healthcare Now" to the roars of thousands below in Daley Plaza, not only did the wider community learn who he was and what he wanted, but much of the country did as well. And his weekly editorial cartoons published in the gay press nationwide found an even wider audience. As the country's first openly gay editorial cartoonist, Sotomayor captured the fight in clever, single-panel cartoons filled with wit and bite, charming national gay leaders like Cleve Jones, creator of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, with his humorous, sharp attacks on President George H.W. Bush and others.

THE OUTRAGE OF DANNY SOTOMAYOR brings the story to life through interviews with fellow activists who climbed out on overhangs with him, friends who encouraged him, and stayed by his side through his struggle until the very end when he died at age 33, and his older brother, who bravely describes their childhood as working-class Puerto Rican/Mexican Chicagoans dealing with family violence and societal bigotry.

Bolstered by an extensive collection of documentary and news footage, including never-before-seen interviews with Sotomayor, this is an intimate portrait of a community galvanized by the horrors of an epidemic that resonates with the recent COVID pandemic, complicated by the ugly specters of hatred and homophobia. And it

reminds viewers of the power of one person to, as Chicago journalist ***Tracy Baim*** put it, "change the world."

The companion website for ***THE OUTRAGE OF DANNY SOTOMAYOR*** includes a feature article about Sotomayor's life; a look at the Youth Empowerment Performance Project inspired by his activism that engages LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness through expressive performance arts; archival images and Sotomayor's provocative political cartoons; and an original video about AIDS Garden Chicago and Belmont Rocks in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

On June 28 at 8:00 pm, WTTW will also premiere ***ART AND PEP***, a moving profile of ***Art Johnston*** and ***José Pepe Peña***, two civil rights leaders who in 1982 founded Chicago's iconic gay bar Sidetrack, a pillar of the city's gay business district that for decades has helped fuel movements and create community in Chicago. They share their 40-year love story and recall the struggle for fair treatment and the fight to love freely – a tale of activism born in the heartland that has inspired others to follow in their footsteps. Art and Pep was directed by ***Mercedes Kane*** and executive produced by ***Kevin Hauswirth***.

The Outrage of Danny Sotomayor was produced and written by WTTW's ***Dan Andries*** and executive produced by ***Anna Chadwick Gardner.*** Chicago Stories is the only weekly documentary series dedicated to uncovering the sweeping history, rich diversity, and breadth of human experience that shaped this great American city. WTTW is the PBS member station in Chicago, committed to creating and presenting unique media content across distinct television and digital channels – WTTW, WTTW Prime, WTTW Create, WTTW World, WTTW PBS Kids 24/7, wttw.com, and the PBS/WTTW video app. Recognized for award-winning journalism and local productions – such as Chicago Tonight, Black Voices, Latino Voices, Chicago Stories, Firsthand, The Most Beautiful Places in Chicago, and Chicago By 'L' – WTTW presents the very best in public affairs, arts and culture, nature and science, history and documentary, and children's public media content.

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PRIDE MONTH, THE CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITYANNOUNCES RETURN OF THE PRIDE TRAIN

To celebrate Pride Month, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) today announced the return of the Pride Train, an eight-car train wrapped in the colors of a rainbow in celebration of the dynamism and continuing evolution of the LGBTQ community locally and nationally. This year marks the seventh anniversary of the Pride Train, which is now in service along the Red Line.

Complementing the Pride Train, CTA and Ventra have also re-launched the Pride Signature Ventra Card, which will is now available for purchase through the Ventra.

"No matter where you live in Chicago or how you identify, you can live freely and proudly in the city of Chicago where we champion the LGBTQ community," said Mayor Brandon Johnson. "The Pride Train is a reminder to residents and visitors that Chicago is a beacon for freedom, hope, and love – and most importantly, all are welcome and celebrated here. As we celebrate Pride events throughout the month, I encourage everyone to use the CTA and continue doing their part to make Chicago a more inclusive place for everyone."

"This tradition is a point of pride for our agency and is a celebration of the community that we serve," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "Our hope is that the annual Pride Train welcomes both new riders to the system and reinforces the feeling of safety and inclusion we want all our riders to feel."

This year's train features a new design, which will cover the entirety of the train. The 2024 design is an evolution of the previous year's line-art, using bands of color like the transit map lines, but with a curved and inverting rainbow pattern forming shapes. The design continues to embrace not only the classic Pride Flag colors, but also includes colors to represent LGBTQ people of color with the black and brown stripes and trans color trio.

The Pride Ventra Card design draws inspiration from our colorful rail lines converging in the Loop.

Learn more at ***ventrachicago.com/purchase/.***

The CTA became the first major U.S. transit agency to unveil a Pride Train when it introduced the concept to Chicago in 2017.

TRISTAN SCHUKRAFT'S TRYST HOSPITALITY ACQUIRES DS TEQUILA IN CHICAGO'S NORTHALSTED

Tech entrepreneur, hospitality visionary and "The CEO of Everything Gay," Tristan Schukraft is expanding his portfolio of iconic LGBTQ+ venues with the acquisition of a property at 3352 N Halsted St, Chicago, IL 60657. The property was the home of DS Tequila and is situated in the heart of Northalstead, known as Boystown and home to a vibrant LGBTQ+ community.

Tristan Schukraft, CEO of Tryst Hospitality and MISTR, explains why he acquired the property: "DS Tequila is going to celebrate Pride and Market Days with the community one more time. Next year, we're going to open a new high-energy bar and nightclub but it's about more than nightlife; it's about protecting our queer enclaves as cities evolve and businesses turnover. I'm making a commitment to Northalsted, just like I did in West Hollywood, San Juan, and Puerto Vallarta."

John Dalton and Stu Zirin, who first opened DS Tequila are welcoming Tristan to the neighborhood, "After a remarkable 14 years of serving the vibrant gay community here in Chicago, the time has come for us to pass on the torch. It's been an honor to create a space where everyone could feel at home, celebrate diversity, and make countless memories. We are thrilled to hand over the keys to a fellow gay leader whose dedication and reputation are well-known within our community. We are confident that under his experienced stewardship, the bar will continue to be a beacon of joy and inclusivity for many years to come."

Tristan added, "Stu Zirin and John Dalton understood neighborhood bars and gathering places are vital to the LGBT community. They created many successful LGBT businesses in Northalstead and I'm proud to continue their legacy."

Tristan will operate the bar as DS Tequila through Chicago Pride Fest, The Chicago Pride Parade and Northalstead's Market Days. This fall, Tristan will begin renovations for a new bar and nightclub which he will announce later. Northalsted was the first officially recognized gay village in the United States and is home to dozens of LGBTQ+ owned businesses.

Tryst Hospitality and its brands are part of Tristan's vision for a global portfolio of gay businesses that champion diversity, luxury, and adventure. Tristan founded MISTR, which provides free online PrEP across the United States to more than 300,000 patients. He launched Tryst Hotels, a luxury brand catering to the discerning tastes of gay travelers, in the most coveted locations within iconic LGBTQ+ travel destinations. Tryst Hotels encourage you to be your best self, even on your worst behavior. The new flagship hotel, The Tryst Puerto Vallarta will open later this in the heart of the Zona Romántica. Reservations are now be accepted ***trysthotels.com.*** The Tryst San Juan is open now but will begin extensive renovations later this year. Fire Island will become the brand's third location in 2025.

Tristan owns and operates The Abbey Food & Bar and The Chapel in West Hollywood, the iconic gay nightlife venue, twice named the best Gay Bar in the World, frequented by A-List talent and neighborhood regulars alike, and named the top nightlife drop off and pick up point in the world for both Uber and Lyft.

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17th ANNUAL ESTEEM AWARDS ANNOUNCED TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY JULY 6TH

Individuals and organizations selected to be honored at the 17th Annual Esteem Awards.The honorees are:

Chicago:

- ***Outstanding Service, Male: Jerome Montgomery***
- ***Outstanding Service, Female: Stephanie Hart***
- ***Future Leaders: Marvin Thompson***
- ***Outstanding Service Social Services/CBO: Proactive Community Service***
- ***Outstanding Healthcare Professional: Dr. Maya Green***
- ***Artistic Expression: Patric McCoy***
- ***Special Recognition: Art Sims***

National:

- ***Outstanding Service, Male: Kevin E. Taylor***
- ***Outstanding Service, Female: Sr. Bishop Jacquelyn Holland***
- ***Outstanding Service, Transgender: Tracee McDaniel***
- ***Future Leaders: Fabian Nelson***
- ***Outstanding Service Social Services/CBO: SisterLove, Inc.***
- ***Outstanding Healthcare Professional: Dr. David Malebranche***
- ***Institutional: The T.R.U.T.H. Project***
- ***Artistic Expression: Donja R. Love***
- ***Special Recognition: Miko Evans***

The Esteem Awards is a 501c (3) organization; annual finalists are selected by a committee of past award winners along with input from the community. Since 2007, the Esteem Awards has honored local and national organizations and individuals for their continued support of African American and LGBTQ+ communities in entertainment, media, civil rights, business, and art.

Award finalists will be celebrated at an in-person event on Saturday, July 6, at Sidetrack 3349 N. Halsted in Chicago from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The event is free, and all are welcome to attend this celebration of honor.

BRISTOL RENAISSANCE FAIRE ANNOUNCES 2024 SEASON! THE TOP RENAISSANCE FAIRE IN THE COUNTRY SET TO OPEN JULY 6TH

The iconic, summer-long Bristol Renaissance Faire will open the gates for the 2024 season after its epic return following the world-wide pandemic and subsequent closures. 'Our team is thrilled to be back and doing what we do best: presenting world-class, immersive entertainment that will put a smile on your face. We continue to work closely with the local health department and the most current CDC recommendations to ensure the safety of our guests, vendors, volunteers and staff,' stated ***Linda McFeters***, Owner and Producer.

The Bristol Renaissance Faire will open Saturday, July 6, for nine weekends closing on Labor Day Monday, September 2. The Faire offers an exciting, eclectic mix of fun and frivolity located on thirty-plus acres and just a short drive from either Chicago or Milwaukee.
Leave your burdens in the 21st century. Enter our gates and become a King, Queen, pirate, sorcerer or anything you want to be for the day and many other guests will play along! Or don't come in costume at all. It's your day. Enjoy it your way. Go on a stroll through the village with a gigantic turkey leg or steak-on-a-stake or one of the many scrumptious vegetarian delights like the perennially-popular Garlic Mushrooms or Chocolate- Covered Strawberries. For the thirsty, craft brews, ciders, cocktails, teas, sodas and other refreshing beverages are readily available.

All the fun details are found at ***RenFair.com/Bristol***

FULL LINEUP ANNOUNCED FOR MILLENNIUM PARK'S SPECIAL FOUR-DAY 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JULY 18-21

Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) announced the full slate of programming for the City's Millennium Park 20th Anniversary Celebration (July 18–21), presented by Capital One. Scheduled to take place almost exactly 20 years since the Park's official opening on July 16, 2004, this four-day free celebration features award-winning headliners, activities for families and youth, dance performances, new public art, and concerts.

This special anniversary programming, produced in partnership with the Millennium Park Foundation, Grant Park Music Festival and more, is offered in addition to the robust lineup of free music festivals, film and music series, workouts, and family programming offered season-long in Millennium Park—the #1 attraction in the Midwest and among the top 10 most-visited sites in the United States.

"The dynamic and diverse range of artists and programs curated for the four-day 20th Anniversary Celebration reflect the best of our city's world-class cultural sector," shared DCASE Commissioner Clinée Hedspeth. "We look forward to welcoming residents and visitors to the heart of downtown to join in this milestone anniversary, make lasting memories, and experience the extraordinary canvas of Millennium Park."

Highlights include the popular salsa group from Colombia ***Fruko y Sus Tesos*** with special guest ***Sonora Dinamita*** featuring ***Alfredo de la Fe***, along with ***Chuwi*** and ***Codigo*** as part of the ***¡Súbelo!*** presentation on Thursday, July 18. Grant Park Orchestra delights on Friday, July 19

(Continued)

with favorites from ***John Williams***, including *Star Wars, Indiana Jones, E.T.*, and more. On Saturday, July 20 attendees can enjoy family programming throughout the day including Chicago Physical Theater Festival and a roving performance by ***Los Pleneros de Don Segundo***, a special 20th birthday celebration hosted by *Eli's Cheesecake* at Cloud Gate, and the highly anticipated Common with the Grant Park Orchestra evening concert, culminating with a fireworks display. The festivities conclude on Sunday, July 21 with more family programming featuring The Golden Horse Ranch Band and more followed by an all-star lineup showcasing a diverse array of House Music, including Chicago's own Steve "Silk" Hurley—who performed at Millennium Park's opening in 2004—along with CeCe Peniston, Robin S., Ann Nesby, Syleena Johnson, Chantay Savage, Keith Nunnally, Sharon Pass, and B. Lauren. Hosted by Shannon "Skip" Syas of S&S Chicago, Inc.

"As a third generation Chicagoan, I have countless memories of time spent in Millennium Park over the past two decades," said ***Dave Kucera***, Capital One's Chicago Market President and Head of Financial Institutions Group. "The Capital One team and I are thrilled to celebrate the incredible impact of this iconic landmark on our city, public arts community and local economy. Capital One's support of the 20th Anniversary Celebration builds on our longstanding commitment to Chicago, elevating our region as a vibrant place to live, work and travel."

As part of the 20th Anniversary Celebration, new temporary public art by world-renowned Chicago artists will be unveiled in July; details to be announced in the coming weeks.

Capital One, the presenting sponsor for Millennium Park's 20th Anniversary Celebration (July 18-21), employs more than 1,600 Chicago-based associates across its office presence and Cafes, and has been voted a Top Workplace by the Chicago Tribune for three consecutive years. The Millennium Park 20th Anniversary Celebration is also supported in part by the Millennium Park Foundation; and a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism. Additional event sponsors include Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Globetrotters Engineering, AllState, Chicago Transit Authority, Millennium Garages and Metra.

Full schedule and more information available at ***MillenniumPark.org.***

BE SMART DURING PRIDE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!

CHICAGO DANCE HEALTH FUND ANNOUNCES DANCE FOR LIFE 2024 COMPANY LINEUP AUGUST 10 AT THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE

Chicago Dance Health Fund announces the companies performing at Dance for Life 2024.

The complete lineup includes returning companies ***Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, Trinity Irish Dance Company, and Visceral Dance Chicago***. Making their Dance for Life debuts are ***Ballet 5:8, Praize Productions***, and ***Winifred Haun & Dancers***. This year's finale, choreographed by ***Jonathan Alsberry,*** is performed by dancers across greater Chicago to original music by ***Ira Antelis.***

Dance for Life 2024 Co-Chairs are ***Victor Alexander*** and ***Maray Gutierrez***, returning for a second year, and new this year, ***Ekua Davis*** and ***Jamin McGinnis.***

Proceeds from Dance for Life benefit Chicago Dance Health Fund, which provides Chicago dance industry professionals with financial support for preventative health care and critical medical needs. An additional beneficiary of Dance for Life is AIDS Foundation Chicago.
Saturday, August 10 at 6 p.m.
Auditorium Theatre
50 E. Ida B. Wells Drive

Tickets now on sale at ***312.341.2300, auditoriumtheatre.org,*** and the Auditorium Theatre Box Office

STEPPENWOLF THEATRE CONCLUDES ITS 48TH SEASON WITH THE WORLD PREMIERE OF LITTLE BEAR RIDGE ROAD BY SAMUEL D. HUNTER FEATURING ENSEMBLE MEMBER LAURIE METCALF WITH JOHN DREA, MEIGHAN GERACHIS AND MICAH STOCK EXTENDED UNTIL AUGUST 4TH.

Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the nation's premier ensemble theater company, is pleased to conclude its 48th season with the world premiere of *Little Bear Ridge Road*, a comic, cosmic and intimate drama by ***MacArthur Fellow Samuel D. Hunter*** (The Whale, A Bright New Boise), directed by Tony Award winner Joe Mantello (Wicked, Airline Highway). This highly-anticipated new work will play June 13 – July 21 in Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theater, 1650 N. Halsted St. in Chicago.

Tony and Emmy Award-winning ensemble member ***Laurie Metcalf*** (*The Conners, Three Tall Women* – Tony Award) comes home to Steppenwolf, joined by ***John Drea*** (Steppenwolf debut), ***Meighan Gerachis*** (POTUS, Domesticated) and Micah Stock (Steppenwolf debut, It's Only A Play – Tony Award nomination).

In the outer limits of rural Idaho, the last two estranged members of the Fernsby family tree, a reclusive aunt and her gay nephew, reunite to sort the mess left behind after a troubled father's passing. They now face an uncomfortable and universal question: how do we deal with other people? And is connection more trouble than it's worth? As their relationship begins anew, the two reluctant Fernsbys—separated by age and experience— start to understand the joys and perils of letting someone else into your own story, even if only for a moment.

Tickets are now on sale at ***steppenwolf.org*** or the Box Office at ***(312) 335-1650.***

ECC MUSICAL THEATRE PRESENTS RENT JULY 26-AUGUST 4

Elgin Community College's Musical Theatre presents *RENT*, July 26-August 4 at the ECC Arts Center SecondSpace Theatre.

Friday and Saturday shows are at 7:30 pm; Sunday shows at 3 pm.

Set in the East Village of New York City, *RENT* is about falling in love, finding your voice, and living for today. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, it's a pop cultural phenomenon with songs that rock and a story that resonates with audiences of all ages.

RENT was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop and on Broadway by ***Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, Allan S. Gordo***n, and New York Theatre Workshop.

Book, Music, and Lyrics by ***Jonathan Larson***. Musical Arrangements by ***Steve Skinner***. Original Concept/Additional Lyrics by ***Billy Aronson***. Music Supervision and Additional Arrangements by ***Tim Weil.*** Dramaturg by ***Lynn Tomson.***

Directed by ***Andy Bero.*** Musical Director is ***Douglas Orlyk.***

Tickets and more information is available at ***eccartscenter.org*** or call ***847-622-0300***.

RENT is presented through a special arrangement with Musical Theatre International (MTI), ***mtishows.com.***

The ECC Arts Center is located at 1700 Spartan Drive, Building H, Elgin, IL.

BIG GAY CABARET ALEXANDRA BILLINGS & HONEY WEST FRIDAY AUGUST 9TH AND SATURDAY AUGUST 10TH

The Big Gay Cabaret focuses on LGBTQIA+ performers celebrating all aspects of the queer community, from Hollywood and Broadway to local Chicago talent. The Cabaret will feature well known singers, drag performers, comedians, musicians and more.

Alexandra Billings is an actress, singer, author, teacher and activist. Alex starred as Madame Morrible in the Broadway production of *Wicked*, the first trans actor to portray the role. She previously starred on Broadway in *Manhattan Theatre Club's The Nap* at the Samuel J. Friedman Theater. ***Ben Brantley*** of the New York Times called her performance "a sensational Broadway debut" and "a marvel of glamorous menace."

Alexandra starred in the Amazon television series *"The Peripheral",* and in the award-winning "Transparent." She has been a recurring guest star on "The Conners," "Never Have I Ever," and many other television series. She stars in and is the Executive Producer of the upcoming feature film release Queen Tut, for which she has been nominated for Best Lead Actress/ Comedy by the Canadian Film Awards. She will Executive Produce and star in the A&E limited series Liz, the story of Elizabeth Carmichael, creator of the ill-fated 3-wheeled car the Dale. Ms. Billings was honored to receive the Visibility Award from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). She is the recipient of five After Dark Awards and a Joseph Jefferson Award. She moderated a panel during Transgender Awareness Month at the Obama White House; she won the TPA Award, The Rainbow Spirit Award, and was inducted into the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in Chicago.

Honey West can be seen in the upcoming *A Little Night Music* as Madam Armfeldt at Theo Ubique. Before that in CLUE and as Bernadette in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* at Mercury Theater Chicago, the role she previously received a Jeff Nomination for best supporting actress in addition to a best actress award from ***BroadwayWorld .com.*** *La Cage Aux Folles* as Jacqueline, U/S Albin at Music Theater Works, Danni in *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* at Drury Lane Theater and Mrs. Cratchit and Electra in *Gypsy* at Porchlight Music Theater. She stared in *Dirtydreams of a Clean-Cut Kid, Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, *Diva Diaries, Jerry's Girls, Tony and Tony's Wedding*, *As You Like It*, and *Pussy on the House*, for which she received a Best Actress Award from BroadwayWorld.com. She was a 2012 inductee into the "Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame". Currently she is working on a new Cabaret Act, and an autobiographical one woman show. She also landed a co-starring role on Fox, *Proven Innocent*.

For Tickets and more information visit **www.mercurytheaterchicago.com** or ***www.BigGayCabaret.com***

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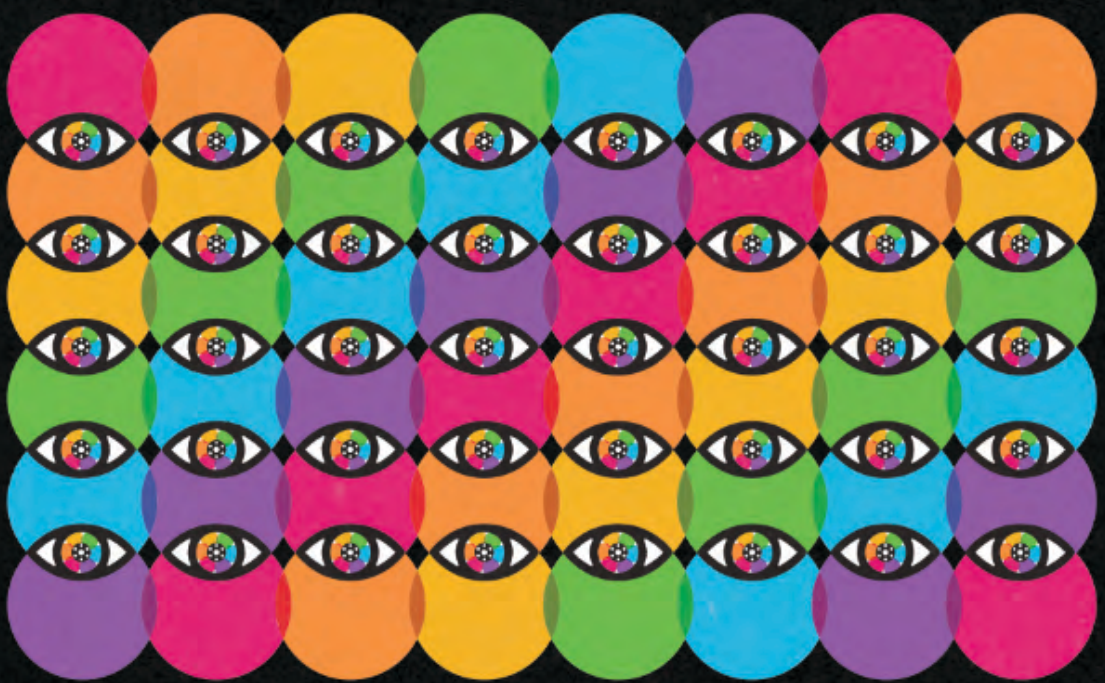

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